**COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT COMMISSION**

**MINUTES**

April 15, 2019

6pm-8pm

Seattle City Hall, Room 370

**Commissioners present:** Ben Mitchell, Carol Redfield, Emily Kim, Felix Chang, Julie Pham, Karyn Kubo Fleming, Rani Hanstad **Commissioners not present:** Alison Turner,Bereket Kiros, Chris Maykut, Leanne Do, Natalie Curtis, Patricia Akiyama, Thais Marbles
**Staff present:** Hilary Nichols

**Opening**

Agenda approved. Quorum was not reached so March minutes were not approved.

**Public Comment**

Marvin Eng (Adam Smith for Congress) is visiting the CIC because he is attending community meetings around Seattle. Here to listen.

Marcus White is attending his 3rd CIC meeting, he has applied to the CIC and hopes he gets a favorable response.

**CIC Response to Public Comment**

Felix C: I audited the records of our public comment and found three different buckets that we could categorize public comment into. These buckets are “advocacy,” “learning,” and “requests”. I think we should work on developing a procedure for each bucket. For example, for “learning” we could take note of the request, and the co-chairs could triage with Hilary (CIC staff liaison) to get the right contact or resource to the person who provided the public comment.

Chris M mentioned that he would be the point person on this.

**Neighborhood Matching Fund Presentation**

Presentation by Program Manager of Neighborhood Matching Fund, Teresa Bui.

Teresa: Thank you for inviting me to this CIC meeting. I am here to talk about the Neighborhood Matching Fund, and grant making in the City as a whole. I’ve brought today the NMF application worksheet, and a informational brochure about the NMF program. The NMF has been funding community projects for about 30 years. There are two funds available through NMF: Small Sparks, which awards up to $5,000, and the Community Partnership Fund, which awards up to $25,000. We accept rolling applications from January through October. If you would like to know more about how we work with individual applicants and awardees, I can connect you with one our NMF Project Managers.

***Didn’t you used to award up to $100,000 for projects?***

Teresa: Yes, first it was $25,000, then was increased to $100,000, and then was realigned to $25,000 again. These changes were in response to department budget changes. We also find that a $25,000 helps folks scope out their projects better, and they end up being more manageable. Especially for groups that don’t have as much experience applying to grants and managing projects, because while we do work with a lot of 501c3 organizations, we also work with a lot of ad hoc neighborhood groups. We find that this cap helps people appropriately scale their projects. Project managers will also help applicants format their ideas to align with NMF program goals, and help them be more competitive in the selection process.

**Felix: *What does that [help] look like?***

Teresa: It depends on the project, and the project management. For the project, there are questions like: does this project involve permits from other departments? Does it involve parks? In that case the NMF project manager will need to support by working with other departments to organize those permits or permissions.

***Ben: Can you put the number of applicants in context? Are you hitting your targets?***

Teresa: We always spend the money we have, and at the end of the year the money is spent. Different neighborhoods have different types of projects, and we don’t presume to know the needs of a community. NMF is very community driven, which is a really important aspect of NMF grants. People come to us and tell us about their community’s needs, and then if their idea meets NMF project requirements then we try to help them out.

***Emily: Could you tell us about a recent project that’s been funded?***

Teresa: Well right now in the grant process we don’t have any funded projects in the 2019 year, but some recent projects include festivals, Park(ing) days, Neighborhood Night Out events, park improvements, P-Patch improvements, artistic murals, RSJI (Race and Social Justice Initiative) events, and youth events. Our main goal is that the project is ready to be accomplished in a timely manner, and that it is community driven. That’s where the “matching” part of the NMF comes in: we ask that projects match City dollars with either additional funds, volunteer hours, donations of materials, etc.

***Felix: When a project will involve different departments, do you bring in stakeholders from those departments? Is there a set procedure for doing this?***

Teresa: There is no set procedure, because it will look a little different depending on which department the Project Manager needs to work with. But we do typically have a list of folks who we reach out to in various departments. For example, we would contact someone in the Office of Economic Development is a group needed permitting for a big festival. The NMF Project Managers help if any issues arise, and will connect the grant recipients to the right person.

***Marvin Eng: Is there data about the NMF grants available?***

Teresa: Yes, you can find that on the City of Seattle Open Data platform.

***Julie: Do you still do workshops?***

Teresa: Yes, we do 3 workshops per application cycle. To advertise these, we post dates on the website and put up posters around the city.

***Felix: How else do you do outreach?***

Teresa: We use social media, advertise through other City department listservs, and the Department of Neighborhoods has many community oriented programs (e.g. P-Patch gardens) and so we advertise through those connections too.

***Julie: Does NMF ever connect with outside funders like the Seattle Foundation to help promote the NMF?***

Teresa: We do provide referrals to other funding sources that we know of. But you raise a good point, and there are probably ways that we could connect with those sources further. For example, working with ad hoc groups, RSJI lens, and helping community with a grant writing series. Lots of people don’t know those skills, and we’ve been thinking about something like a funding resource fair, possibly with private funders. We could provide a platform for lots of funders to be all in one place.

***Felix: I’m thinking about the PACE (People’s Academy for Community Engagement) program, and I wonder what it would look like to have a grant-writing module in the PACE curriculum.***

Teresa: Yes, that’s a great idea and we have lots of ideas like that. The challenge is always money, resources, and capacity, and how much follow-up we commit to after doing things like that. We want to go beyond just offering a class.

***Felix: What about partnering with the Libraries, or the Office of Civil Rights? Possibly increasing the funding dollars available by having City departments collaborate more.***

***Karyn: What about the Puget Sound Grantwriters Association events?***

Teresa: Those are great but you have to pay for membership, and I think those are missing a group of people who don’t even know how to access or find those kinds of events.

***Karyn: In those 3 NMF workshops you mentioned, what do you talk about?***

Teresa: We talk about everything that relates to NMF. So we answer questions, talk about past projects and go over the application process. The folks who come to these workshops usually have an idea in mind that they want to workshop, and they’re looking for a funder.

***Ben: I understand that there are constraints with money coming from the Department of Neighborhoods. I work in philanthropy and often the funding in that sector is very restricted, but in reality organizations could really use cash money. Do you have flexibility to open the restrictions that exist for NMF funds?***

Teresa: I agree with you that unrestricted dollars can be very important to an organization, but the nature and value of the NMF program don’t really allow for that flexibility. Namely, one of the biggest expectations of an NMF project is that it provides a community benefit. Paying for the rent of a non-profit’s office would be very helpful to them, but that does not contribute a community benefit. We have been thinking about how we can better support capacity building, and I’m curious about how we can open more City-wide funding for that. For example, how can we support capacity building for the upcoming 2020 census? This would need to be a separate fund from the NMF, but it could work.

One of the questions you sent me was about how to make it easier for diverse communities to apply to the NMF and other grants in the City? And to that I would say that having one basic application would be really helpful. Right now, every department does it a little differently. I think it would be good if we had a more robust and organized place for all the funding opportunities in the City. Right now, it’s not completely updated.

***Julie: Why do you think that some departments don’t opt in?***

Teresa: I’m not sure, it could be that they don't know about it or aren’t on top of updating with new information.

***Felix: It seems like arguing for more consistency in that would be some low hanging fruit the CIC could advocate for.***

***Karyn: Is it possible that you could qualify for different grants from one centralized application?***

Teresa: I think we could standardize an application for basic information (i.e. names, addresses, IRS determination, etc.) and use that across programs. But we would still need to have separate applications from each grant, because each one is unique and would need to ask different questions.

Another question I was sent was about increase equity, and my questions back to you are how do you define equity? In the City or the community? Internal or external?

***Felix: We are interested in the City of Seattle. We usually go with the definition of equity provided by the Race and Social Justice Initiative.***

Teresa: In that case, I would talk about how to encourage departments to work more collaboratively. For example, the Duwamish Opportunity Fund and the Office of Economic Development have funded some of the same organizations, and I wonder if there could have been more collaboration to offer one big grant that combined the two departments. Another example is that the Human Services Department and the Department of Education and Early Learning recently came out with similar Requests for Proposals, and I wonder if there could have been more alignment between the two.

***Ben: Do you provide the NMF grant funds upfront, or is it a reimbursement process?***

Teresa: Reimbursement. The grantees expend the money, and we reimburse them after. However, in the Duwamish River Opportunity Fund, we are experimenting with paying at milestones. In this strategy, we pay once work is done in a set unit of time. This way there is a little more room to get ahead of expenses in a program. We are trying this year, and we will see how it works.

***Felix: What are the barriers to coordinating between City departments?***

Teresa: I think it boils down to knowledge, for example new pilot funds pop up pretty frequently, but a lot of times it’s hard to know about them before it’s really too late to do collaboration.

***Felix: What are the greatest needs that could be supported by the CIC?***

Teresa: To clarify, I know one role you have is to advise, are you interested in collaborating further?

***Felix: Yes we advise, and we can also create publicity. We can write to council to advocate for things, especially during budget time. The NMF aligns really closely with our work.***

Teresa: What are your structures for advising?

***Felix: We currently have three workgroups, and one of those will be focusing on grant making in the City. You’ll likely be interfacing with them the most.***

Teresa: Is this group looking to connect only in Department of Neighborhoods, or other City departments and groups as well?

***Felix: Well because of the snow we missed our February meeting, so we are still finalizing our workplans. We’ll be reaching out soon.***

***Julie: Do you publish awarded applications?***

Teresa: No, but we do publish information about the projects generally. With publishing the applications, I anticipate some privacy issues. But if you are curious about that I would contact someone in Seattle Information Technology.

***Carol: You mentioned that there are knowledge deficits in coordinating, is there a space to see everything in one place?***

Teresa: Yes, there is a “Grants and Funding” webpage on the City of Seattle’s website, but as I mentioned before not everyone is updating it consistently.

***Felix: Would it be helpful to ask why they’re not posting to that website?***

Teresa: All the departments work so differently, it’s really hard to know why they aren’t posting. I recently made a document with links to all the available grants and funding opportunities I know about in the City, and we plan on putting this in the Department of Neighborhood’s Community Resource Hub.

***Julie: Do you have data on how many applications are received per neighborhood vs. how many are funded?***

Teresa: Possibly, but I will say that seeing those numbers doesn’t put it in context. For example, there might be 20 applications in a district, but a bunch of them didn’t complete the application or it’s an event we already funded (we only fund every other year) and that’s why it wasn’t selected to be funded. So, this number might not point to disproportionality of funds.

**CIC Retreat**

CIC members discuss the upcoming retreat.

Priorities for the retreat: foster cohesiveness, get to know one another, discuss the annual report out event, and talk about collective impact, scaling impact, and how to be more continuous in the work.

Retreat agenda reviewed and updated.

**Workgroup work time and share out**

CIC split up into 3 workgroups (Census 2020, Grantmaking, and Community Engagement Best Practices).

Each workgroup shared their work to the whole CIC.

**Public Comment**

None