



Contra Costa County Economic Opportunity Meeting Minutes

Economic Opportunity Council Public Hearing

Location: 40 Douglas Drive, Martinez



**Date:** 05/15/2013      **Time Convened:** 7:36 pm      **Time Terminated:** 8:32 pm      **Recorder:** Erika Ramos

**EOC Members & Staff Attendees:** Rachele Gomez, Joe McFerran, Jeremy Wade, Kathy Jones, Christine Sevier

**Absent:**

**Public Attendees:** Camilla Rand, Jagjit Bhambra, Sung Kim, Rita Loza, Pam Arrington, Monica Montano, Isabel Torres, CherRita Jones, Marissa LaMagna, Matt Bisseu, Neil Zarchin, Wendy L. Wilson, Edith Vinne, Jowcol Viña, Armando Morales, Alissa Friedman, Rikki Thomas, Irene Medivia, Edman Gradian, Susanna Luna

**Agencies Represented:** Childcare Services, Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Weatherization Program, Work Experience programs, CCC Health Services Dept. (HSD), Contra Costa Clubhouses, Inc., Opportunity Junction, City of Richmond Summer Youth Program, and Bay Area Legal Aid

TOPIC	RECOMMENDATION / SUMMARY
Review Desired Outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Rachele Gomez called the meeting to order at 07:36 pm. She commenced the meeting by reviewing the desired outcomes and ground rules.</li> <li>• Comment cards were distributed to the public to write down comments, questions, and concerns.</li> <li>• The Economic Opportunity Council 2013 Public Hearing Summary was distributed.</li> </ul>

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<p>Introductions</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Jagjit Bhambra explained the purpose of the meeting and introduced the Economic Opportunity Council members to the public.</li> <li>• The public hearing meeting is to gather the public input for the Community Action Plan for 2014-2015 in addition to the Public Hearing Summary and the Community Action Plan that has been implemented in the year 2012-2013.</li> <li>• Jagjit shared the “Making California Strong” publication that was distributed. The publication contained examples of the Community Action Network and the community services that are being provided through multiple programs with the purpose of making the community self-reliant.</li> <li>• The members of the Economic Opportunity Council represent the five districts; they convey the information that their community will need in the coming years 2014-2015.</li> </ul>
<p>Public Hearing Summary</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Rachele Gomez read the mission statement: “It is the mission of the Community Action Partnership to strengthen, promote, represent and serve its network of member agencies to assure that the issues for the poor are effectively heard and addressed.”</li> <li>• Rachele continued by reading the Introduction to the Community Action partnership, 2012-2013 Community Action Plan, Goal Statement 1, Goal Statement 2, and Goal Statement 3, Areas of Priority, and Areas of Direct Services.</li> <li>• The CSB program manager and CSBG subcontractors were provided with opportunity to speak on behalf of their programs.</li> <li>• <b><u>Areas of Direct Services:</u></b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Child care Services</li> <li>• Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Weatherization Program</li> <li>• Work Experience Programs</li> <li>• CCC Health Services Dept. (HSD)</li> <li>• Contra Costa Clubhouses, Inc.</li> <li>• Opportunity Junction</li> <li>• City of Richmond Summer Youth Program</li> <li>• Bay Area Legal Aid</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Camilla Rand spoke for the Childcare Services: Early Head Start and Head Start Program.</li> </ul>

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Monica Montano spoke for the Low Income Home Energy Assistance Weatherization Program</li> <li>• Jagjit Bhambra spoke regarding Work Experience Programs.</li> <li>• Rikki Thomas spoke for Contra Costa Clubhouses, Inc.</li> <li>• Alissa Friedman spoke for Opportunity Junction:</li> <li>• Jowcol Viña spoke for Bay Area Legal Aid.</li> </ul>
<p>Addressing Community Needs</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Questions &amp; Concerns</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Rachele Gomez asked the public to provide information and questions on the cards provided.</li> </ul> <p>1) <u>CherRita Jones</u>: voiced her questions regarding a safety concern. She lives in Antioch and does not know how to go about getting the street properly secured with stop signs. She feels that the parents in her neighborhood do not provide enough supervision over their children. There is a semi-busy street that she has seen several children just hanging out and not going to school. She shared how she sees children crossing this street late at night and how they are running the risk of getting run over by the speeding cars. For instance, she had assisted a child of three or four years old because her seven-year old sibling left the child in the middle of the street because he got scared while crossing the street. She also expressed her concerns in other safety areas in the neighborhood, but her main concern is the safety for the children. She would like to know how she can make her neighborhood safer and getting the city's help.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <u>Rachele Gomez</u>: That is something directed to the city council program, this is for funding purposes, for programs.</li> <li>• <u>Christine Sevier</u>: If funding goes to the police department, they may be able to hire additional staff. If you see that the safety concerns are beyond street signs, then yes write that down.</li> <li>• <u>Kathy Jones</u>: Also, if you see that children are being neglected, you can call CPS, because if anyone is under five and ten years old, out and unsupervised. You can call CPS and what you told us you can report to them.</li> <li>• <u>Jeremy Wade</u>: How close is a school next to you?</li> <li>• <u>CherRita Jones</u>: The school is about ten minutes away.</li> <li>• <u>Jeremy Wade</u>: You might want to talk to the principal and see if you can get a crossing guard per say during those hours of going and coming from school.</li> <li>• <u>CherRita Jones</u>: That's the issue, they don't go to school. CPS should be involved because they are not going to school.</li> <li>• <u>Kathy Jones</u>: If you don't report them who will?</li> <li>• <u>CherRita Jones</u>: Yes. I was thinking when you said funding- there should be some funding for afterschool programs in the neighborhood. They are not going to school and not being</li> </ul>

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cared for, but if there is a mentor program to tell them their education is important, maybe the parents can come in and hear how education is important.

- Rachele Gomez: Is there a specific area in Antioch?
- CherRita Jones: There is by Lone Tree and Davison area. There is a clubhouse but it is closed, but with funding it can be open and run at least twice a week or something. Just so the kids can have somewhere to go instead of just hanging out on the street.
- Rachele Gomez: You might want to contact that clubhouse and see if there is a way as a concern citizen that you can get them and to let them know that there are programs available to apply for funding.
- Kathy Jones: In addition, you can become the community activist- you see something that is ongoing in the community and you can call the authorities when you feel uncomfortable.

2) Irma Ruiz: Concern for zero to five years old afterschool programs and summer programs to take the children to. Her child will be going to kindergarten for the next school year and she has the issue of childcare after three hours of school. She will end up paying a lot of money for childcare to allow her to continue to work. She would like to know of after school programs for kindergarten for low income families or affordable rates.

- Jeremy Wade: Do you happen to live nearby a YMCA at all? Because I take my child to a YMCA and we pay about \$2,500.00 a whole year from afterschool hours to six pm.
- Irma Ruiz: I am not sure; I think there is a Boys & Girls club in Pittsburg. My thing is that I live in Pittsburg, but I work in San Ramon.
- Rachele Gomez: What is the location that you are looking for the program- is it Pittsburg or San Ramon?
- Irma Ruiz: Pittsburg

3) Marissa LaMagna: She is very interested in nutrition and food access, she has noticed that Brentwood has many farms and incredible food bounty. On the other hand there is Richmond, El Sobrante, and in Antioch a lot of places that are struggling with food and nutrition. She thinks it's the cause of a lot of violence, people are not well fed, and the food they have for breakfast is Coca Cola and Chips. She works with Richmond Build and over the years there has been talked about opening a program that can teach people how to grow food, access food, and cooking classes. There is a whole agriculture history in Richmond that is lying dormant.

- Rachele Gomez: Would this be more a program for children or all ages?
- Marissa LaMagna: For children, adults, anyone that really wants to learn where rich food

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comes from, and where to access healthy food. What are some places out there/resources, cooking classes. Some people receiving food boxes but they do not know how to cook it. Resurrect all green houses.

- Rachele Gomez: Is there a direct location, you think is need it?
- Marissa LaMagna: You mean which specific community?
- Rachele Gomez: Yes, if you can pin point.
- Marissa LaMagna: Richmond, Antioch, and maybe Martinez, El Sobrante and all places where there are problems with food, obesity, and asthma.

4) Rikki Thomas: Site Supervisor at Calli House voiced her request. "It would be great if there is a public house in the East County Antioch area. We house eighteen youths, six minors and the rest are eighteen and twenty-one years old. We are serving the entire county and last year we serviced 168 transitional age group. It's really hard because they come from all over the county, some from Concord. They don't have access to a shelter that would help them to keep their employment and they having to move back and forth. It would be great to have a shelter that would house this age group in this area. The youth shelter that we work with is right next to an adult shelter and our youth definitely do not want to share the adult shelter. They don't have a connection with older adults. They like to be around people they can share similar problems and face similar barriers or other issues. It would be fantastic if there could be a Calli House out in the East County. There is a need- we have been seeing a lot of homelessness. We have been full since September of last year- as soon someone finds permanent housing there is another person waiting to fill that space."

- Rachele Gomez: Do you have a waiting list?
- Rikki Thomas: We do have a waiting list.
- Christine Sevier: Do you guys collaborate with youth homes that are out here because we have three youth homes, including Concord and Antioch. They are also foster agencies/transitional, which is for foster kids that are in transition. I wonder if you can collaborate.
- Rikki Thomas: We work both foster kids that are just runways or just homeless, so we see a wide variety.
- Christine Sevier: Are you directing it more towards to the homeless need and permanent shelter?
- Rikki Thomas: Yes

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5) Neil Zarchin: Works for the Food Bank of Contra Costa in Solano. They have a program that was launched in July of last year (2012), in Central county, East county and it expanded into west County in February. They have trucks that have been modified to bring fresh produce, and nothing but fruits and vegetables into food deserts that goes twice a month, and distributed for free. With every truck that goes out there is a bilingual nutrition educator. Because there is a lot of people that are second and third generation that living in these deserts, that have not seen certain kinds of fruits and they do not know what to do with it. Their program not only teaches the nutritional value, but the preparation and what particular fruits and vegetables with help prevent health issues. Even though they received millions pounds of food from the food drives, they get a little bit from Urban Hills, Urban Greener but it is enough and they still need funding to buy produce. There are numerous studies that show particularly children, the academic performance suffers. A lot of times on coming summer months, kids are missing two meals a day really depending what they bring to the neighborhoods.

- Rachele Gomez: The funding that you are addressing would be towards produce for families for helping needs?
- Neil Zarchin: One of the most difficult barriers low-income population faces is access to fresh produce. The Food Banks has adopted a goal- we want 50% of the food that we distribute in the future to be fresh fruits and vegetables because people need nutrition, especially children because childhood obesity affects long-term health as well as academic performance, which impacts future opportunities. I would like to see funding for access to nutritious foods, especially fresh fruits and vegetables in low-income areas.
- Jeremy Wade: Do you go to farmers markets to purchase them?
- Neil Zarchin: No, we purchase in consortium of the Food Banks from the Bay Area to north of the Oregon Border and from the California Association of Food Banks warehouse in Sacramento. We get secondary produce. Our aggregated cost for all the produce we buy is less than 12 cents per pound, which is phenomenally cheap, but we still are buying millions of pounds.

6) Armando Morales: He is a member of the policy council for two years. He has a dream of growing vegetables and fruits. When he came into this country he worked in this area for two years in Brentwood and has lived in Brentwood for twenty-five years. He has worked with several programs for the Contra Costa County and "Connexion Latina". Three years ago, there was a lot of violence in Brentwood because of gang colors and his fifteen year old neighbor was killed during that time. He started a youth group at his house and he had some incidents with his

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	<p>neighbors because of his youth group; he then asked the city for assistance. The city provided a building for him to continue his work with the youth.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <u>Rachele Gomez</u>: Is there a direct concern? You are doing great things for the community. Taking thirty kids into your backyard then turning it into a building, that's amazing but is there a direct concern that we can take aim that you want us to really to take into our assessment as far as after school programs or classes?</li> <li>• <u>Armando Morales</u>: Yes, multicultural. Sports, dancing, teaching how to plant vegetables and fruits. Legal assistance for the people in Brentwood. A lot of people need assistance with immigration. Everything can be at one center.</li> </ul> <p>7) <u>Susanna Luna</u>: I am interested to know about the after school programs. Place for cultural-where kids can learn guitar, piano, art, and dance.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <u>Jeremy Wade</u>: What city?</li> <li>• <u>Susanne Luna</u>: I live in San Pablo. Thank you.</li> </ul>
Meeting Evaluation	Rachele Gomez shared her appreciation to everyone that attended the Public Hearing.
Adjournment	Adjourned at 8:32 pm