

RENTAL HOUSING MEDIATION TASK FORCE
MINUTES
SEPTEMBER 1, 2011

DAVID GEBHARD PUBLIC MEETING ROOM
630 Garden Street
Santa Barbara, California, 93101
5:30PM

1. CALL TO ORDER & ROLL CALL:

LEESA BECK	<u>X</u>	PARVANEH GIVI	<u>E</u>
DAVID BRAINARD	<u>X</u>	DAN HERLINGER	<u>E</u>
ROBERT BURKE	<u>X</u>	TRUDY PAUL	<u>X</u>
CHRIS CASEBEER	<u>E</u>	SCOTT WEXLER	<u>X</u>
SILVIO DILORETO	<u>X</u>	BRUCE WOLLENBERG	<u>X</u>
MARTI FURMAN	<u>X</u>	LYNN GOEBEL	<u>X</u>
JUSTIN DULLUM	<u>X</u>		

Officers: Chair Justin Dullum, Vice Chair Lynn Goebel, Secretary Scott Wexler
Staff Present: Andrea Bifano, Sr. Rental Housing Mediation Specialist

2. PUBLIC COMMENT:

The Rental Housing Mediation Task Force (RHMTF) was conducted in compliance with the standards set by the Americans with Disability Act. No members from the public were present to address the RHMTF.

3. APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

Motion: To approve the Minutes of the August 4, 2011

Action: Wexler/Casebeer, 10/0/1. (DiLoreto abstained. Casebeer, Givi, Heringer excused)
Motion carried.

4. Rental Housing Mediation Task Force Budget and Program Changes for FY 2012:

Up-date/Discussion: Andrea Bifano distributed a five point outline of issues that were brought up by City Council with regard to the Rental Housing Mediation Task Force and its fifteen member Council appointed Advisory Group. The five points were identified as: 1. Grants/Fund Raising, 2. Fee Recovery; 3. Volunteers Utilization; 4. Training by Mediators; 5. By-laws (unlimited terms for mediators); and 501(c)3.

5. SUBCOMMITTEES:

A. *Grant Writing/Fund Raising:* Justin Dullum, Chair reviewed the names of the subcommittee members: Robert Burke, Silvio Di Loreto, Chris Casebeer, Parvaneh Givi and himself. Robert Burke provided an up-date on the subcommittee's efforts. He shared that he had contacted several bank for Community Reinvestment Act Funds, including Bank of the West, First Bank and two foundations, the Gildea Foundation and Santa Barbara Foundation. He stated that he and Justin Dullum, Chair, would be meeting with representatives of Northern Trust Bank on September 7, 2011 at 2:00pm. Robert further reported that he read "Grant Writing for Dummies" and found useful information, including that anyone writing a grant should inform grantors who they've already applied with, and that any unused money should be offered to be returned. Silvio Di Loreto pointed out the need to emphasize that the program namely helps the poor and under-privileged. He also shared that he had been in contact with various banks representatives and would soon be talking to another bank representative. Chris Casebeer reported that he would approach a representative from Santa Barbara Bank & Trust.

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On the morning of August 23, 2011, Silvio Di Loreto, Robert Burke and Andrea Bifano met with Brent Field, Librarian of the City of Santa Barbara's Public Library. They were given training on how to use the library's computer system to locate possible grantors. Together, they identified five additional grantor's to contact. Chris Casebeer thanked Parvaneh Givi and staff for the prototype grant proposal. He further shared that on August 26, 2011, the RHMTF had submitted a grant proposal for the Fund for Santa Barbara. He proposed inviting Jim Armstrong and Paul Casey to an up-coming RHMTF meeting.

B. Mediation Training: Justin Dullum, Chair reviewed the names of the subcommittee members, Leesa Beck and Lynn Goebel. Leesa Beck reported on the results on the survey regarding the Advisory Group's views on training and availability to volunteer in the RHMTF office in an effort to defray staffing costs. The results indicated that there was interest to assist staff in the office, however the volunteer hours (due to work and other commitments) would not eliminate a part-time staff position. Parvaneh Givi recommended using interns to further defray some of the cost of part-time office staff assistance. She volunteered to put an ad asking for interns.

Andrea Bifano shared that the mediators would receive mediation training credits for their assistance in the office answering the telephone and working with clients. She further added that the hours worked in the office would be applied to the required 25 hours of mediation training, in compliance with the California Dispute Resolution Programs Act guidelines for neutrals, in order to receive their Mediator Certificate. Lastly, she stated that volunteer time spent in the office would be reported to City Council as action taken towards mediator utilization. Regarding additional mediator training, Lynn Goebel shared that she had found low-cost and free on-line training programs, and that she would present them as an option for future Task Force training.

C. Advocacy: Justin Dullum, Chair reviewed the names of the subcommittee members: Robert Burke, Leesa Beck, Chris Casebeer, and David Brainard. Robert Burke reported on behalf of the Advocacy Subcommittee. He shared that he had researched the history of the RHMTF. Leesa Beck spoke about sending letters to former clients in an effort to obtain testimonials of their experiences with regard to the use of the Face-to-Face mediations and the volunteer mediators. David Brainard spoke of using the media to get those testimonials out to the public and City Council. Robert Burke shared that he spoke with Hannah-Beth Jackson as a follow-up regarding having a panel of the RHMTF's mediators speak on her radio talk show and that it did not seem possible at this time for various reasons.

6. DISPUTE RESOLUTION PROGRAMS ACT FUNDING:

Santa Barbara County: Andrea Bifano presented an informational packet in response to Silvio Di Loreto's previous request for information on local Dispute Resolution Programs Acts (DRPA) funds. The packet contained information on the history of the Dispute Resolution Program's Act and its Guidelines and Regulations. Andrea Bifano reported that she had spoken with the Department of Consumer Affairs Attorney in charge of the program recipients' of the DRPA funding in California. She further shared that the RHMTF had not received DRPA funds since approximately 1998 when the local court's request for proposal (RFP) changed. She stated that the change would only allow those applicants to apply that provided mediation in Small Claims Court. She further shared that DRPA money received in previous

years were supplemental only and never full funding for the program. The question by the group was, could RHMTF, as non-court mediation service apply for this money? Andrea Bifano responded by stating that the RFP was not open this year and that she did not see the funding as a viable option now or in the near future.

7. SLIDING SCALE FEE:

Report Lynn Goebel: Lynn Goebel provided an eight page informational packet on *RHMTF Fee Recovery: Sliding Scale Fee Schedule*. She clarified: 1. What is a sliding scale fee; What non-profits use as guidelines, 3. How the Dispute Resolution Programs Act Defines Sliding Scale, 4. What the RHMTF Uses for Sliding Scale Fee. Lastly, discussion ensued as to whether the group thought the program should charge clients money for mediation services and /or information services. Various view points were expressed. Chris Casebeer suggested a written notation on the mediation paperwork distributed to participants welcoming donations. Parvaneh Givi thought it important that RHMTF have a Sliding Scale fee. Marti Furman shared that she thought it important that Landlords be encouraged to donate to the RHMTF.

8. NEW BUSINESS:

Robert Burke requested that staff convey to Brian Bosse, Housing and Redevelopment Manager, the RHMTF Advisory Group's request that Management's up-coming presentation to the City Council be presented to the Task Force in advance to allow for feedback from the RHMTF Advisory Group. Andrea Bifano confirmed that she would convey the request.

9. MEDIATION TRAINING: (DPRA Mediation Training approximately 45 minutes)

Administrative intake skills related to dispute resolution services, including completion of paperwork involved in handling and tracking cases, administrative and reporting forms.

A training session was held by the Training Subcommittee: Leesa Beck and Lynn Goebel, Andrea Bifano assisted. Leesa Beck and Lynn Goebel distributed a training packet. Together they discussed Intake Skills and helpful hints showing how to take information when someone calls the RHMTF office for services. Board members broke into two person groups to engage in summation techniques.

10. ANNOUNCEMENTS:

Robert Burke announced that Barbara Smith-Sherrill would receive a Mediator Proclamation from the Mayor and Council on September 20, 2011 at 2:00pm. Advisory group members were encouraged to attend in support of Barbara Smith-Sherill and her dedicated years of service to the RHMTF program.

11. ADJOURNMENT:

The RHMTF meeting was adjourned at 7:30pm.