



Metro | *Meeting minutes*

Meeting: North Portland Enhancement Committee
Date: Wednesday, Nov. 20, 2013 5:30 to 8:30 p.m.
Place: Room 270
Purpose: Selection of capacity building grant Letters of Interest (LOIs) to invite for final application

Attendees

- Councilor Sam Chase
- Mark Kirchmeier – University Park
- Steve Joiner – Kenton
- Renee Garrels – Arbor Lodge
- Shawn DeCarlo – St. Johns
- Jeff Bissonnette – Cathedral Park
- David Davies – Overlook
- Cece Hughley Noel – Portsmouth

Staff

- Heather Nelson Kent, Metro
- Oriana Quackenbush, Metro
- Tom Griffin-Valade, City of Portland

Welcome – Councilor Chase

Meeting came to order at 5:40 p.m.

Approve October Minutes

Jeff Bissonnette moved to approve the minutes, Shawn DeCarlo seconded and the motion was approved.

North Portland Enhancement Fund update – Councilor Chase

Attachment: North Portland_Budget Forecast_final_112013

Councilor Chase presented the budget forecast for discussion. He thanked David Davies for his help identifying and narrowing down the budget process. He also reminded the committee that he and Heather Nelson Kent worked together to review the administrative costs to ensure the costs were adjusted to reflect program needs to administer the grants and cutting years four and five. He noted that this also puts the burden on the program to complete spend down of these funds within this timeframe. Heather Nelson Kent noted that any savings from budget to actual in this FY (FY13-14) will roll back into the fund.

Heather Nelson Kent explained that \$60,000 is the amount budgeted to provide coaching services to organizations invited to submit full applications, as described in the pre-application materials. Additionally, these funds would be used for a peer-learning cohort of the successful applicants (estimated at \$8-10,000 total) to connect them with each other and help ensure they are collaborating, being strategic and not stepping on each other's toes as they move forward with their capacity-building projects.

Renee Garrels asked when is the goal to disperse the grant funds? Heather Nelson Kent explained that information presented to applicants stated that funds would be dispersed by the start of the fiscal year (July 1) but if the committee speeds up the timeline, a budget amendment request could be made to Council to make the funds available sooner.

Cece Hughley asked if the budget is a modification from earlier and if Council wants a modification report or if they just see it as a line item. Councilor Chase said that the Committee controls these funds but the Council must approve an annual budget that allows them to be expended. Additionally, the Metro Council approves the individual contracts as well. He said the Committee could create a presentation on the budget for Council in addition to the regular reports he gives to Council.

There was some discussion of how the requirement for reimbursement only for these funds affects the budget and how organizations handle this requirement. Heather Nelson Kent stated that unexpended grant funds roll over to the next year automatically and that some organizations use a fiscal agent to be able to pay costs upfront if they have concerns about cash flow. It is unknown how the trail funds will be spent, it depends on who is managing the construction of the project – Metro or the City of Portland.

Councilor Chase gave an update on the North Portland Greenway Trail project. The budget commits up to \$850,000 to get a bridge over Columbia Boulevard and extend the trail to the top of the prairie at the former landfill. This \$850,000 was used as a match to secure the funding from The Oregon Department of Transportation's Statewide Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) grant (still pending final approval). Councilor Chase would like to

see the trail continue further up through the prairie, crossing a bridge over the slough and extending to Kelly Point Park and the rest of the 40-Mile Loop. He is looking into using the same \$850,000 as match for another grant application from Connect Oregon V.

Tom Griffin-Valade asked if there had been any news coverage of the trail funding. Councilor Chase said there was television and newspaper coverage after he announced it in his newsletter and facebook page. Discussion that more coverage is deserved about the committee dedicating these funds.

Action Item: Councilor Chase will ask staff to work for additional news coverage once the Transportation Commission finally approves the STIP award for the trail project.
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Final committee ranking of applications

Attachment: 2013 NPEC_LOIs_November Meeting Worksheet_11.15.13 provided for review ahead of meeting

Councilor Chase explained that tonight's goal is to narrow down the list of the top 40 proposals to about 120 percent of available funding (about \$706,000) to invite to submit full proposals. Because there is the possibility that some of these final proposals do not meet the criteria, the extra 20 percent of applications are needed to ensure the grant funds are going toward the very best projects and that all the funds will be spent.

Councilor Chase reminded the committee that this narrowing exercise is not a reflection on the quality of the organization or even the proposal but that we must consider whether the project presented is a good fit for the capacity-building grant criteria.

Each committee member was asked to identify a minimum of five projects to cut. Councilor Chase encouraged everyone to identify even more than that using the red sticker dots to flag these projects. Once all members had completed the exercise the committee continued to discuss the pros/cons of the lower and mid-ranked projects until they reached consensus on a group of projects to invite to submit full applications. See attached spreadsheet for final list.

General ranking considerations

There was a discussion on how to weight the proposals, particularly in regards to a focus on North Portland generally versus expanding into North Portland or a region-wide effort and whether the proposal was clearly for capacity building. It was noted that the coaching could be used to help organizations identify how tools (like computers) they are requesting can be strategically used for a capacity building effort.

The committee discussed which types of projects and organizations are being considered for an invitation to submit a full application in an attempt to find a balance between them. Some discussion in particular was had about additional trail and greenway funding requests since \$850,000 dollars outside of the grants are already dedicated to these types of efforts.

It was asked if it was appropriate or if the committee was comfortable asking organizations to cut their budgets when submitting full applications. Some noted that there may be proposals where cuts could be easily made but others may already be as low as they can be. Heather Nelson Kent stated that this could be done, but it is not best practice for the committee to parse funding without consultation with the applicants. If reduced funding is likely, it is best to give applicants a chance to reduce their requests in the final application.

Roosevelt High School

The committee weighed the two proposals still under consideration and determined that the Extended Learning Academy proposal was more clearly for capacity building than the STEAM Options and Opportunities proposal.

Open Meadows

It was discussed that the proposal is dependent on their capital campaign which has not really started, and suggested that perhaps they should have applied to fund the feasibility work needed to launch it.

Impact NW

It was noted that there are other service providers providing similar services in the area. The request is all allocated for computer equipment, not clear how it is capacity building rather than programmatic.

Store to Door

Some concern was expressed that the program is too regionally focused, some would rather a North Portland specific organization serving the same number of North Portland residents receive funds over them because of the grant focus area. It was noted that this proposal is clearly for capacity building and they do serve North Portland residents. A question was raised about whether enhancing services for seniors using computer technology was advisable, and it was clarified that the software would be for the staff. Seniors would call in their orders as they do now, but staff would use the software to streamline the completion of the orders.

De la Salle High School

It was reported that due to receiving other funding they have reduced their request to \$25,000. There was some discussion of their funding base and fundraising capacity as a private school if weighed against public school applicants. Cece Hughley noted that this proposal and others for schools seeking technology may qualify for funding from Mt. Hood Cable Regulatory Commission which is currently accepting pre-applications. (Staff note: see below)

Action Item: Heather Nelson Kent will research the funding opportunity currently offered by Mt. Hood Cable Regulatory Commission (MHCRC) to determine whether any of the NPEC applicants would qualify for funding.

Staff note: Individual schools are NOT eligible to apply for the grants that are currently being solicited by MHCRC so, no need for our applicants to rush to put a proposal together for these

funds. The bulk of the funds (estimated at about \$2 million/annually for all 6 school districts within Multnomah County) are being administered through a prioritization process with the districts. They are currently developing a strategic funding initiative for the distribution and use of these funds, including how to integrate technology into the classroom and professional training. It sounds like through this process, districts and schools will be required address some of the issues that committee members raised regarding best practices for integrating technology into classrooms.

Lagniappe

It was noted that this is a coalition of 11 neighborhood associations, 7 of which are in the target area. The group itself is new, but the neighborhood associations are established and they have secured an in-kind match from the Office of Neighborhood Involvement (ONI). It was discussed that this may a good opportunity for a consultant to assist in facilitating this initiative.

Growing Gardens

It was discussed that this organization is not North Portland specific but has a wide service area. The proposal is to build capacity by hiring a development assistant but does not target North Portland specifically. It was also noted that this organization has a well established funding base.

Hollywood Senior Center

There was a discussion about how the project would be funded beyond the grant. It was noted that the proposal is to expand outreach and awareness of the existing programs to be sure they are utilized by residents within North Portland. If successful, the same level of outreach may not be necessary. The relationship to Urban League was also discussed. It was noted that the Hollywood Senior Center would be the primary agency and Urban League would help get people to the Charles Jordan Community Center site and that both organizations have a good track record and it appeals to some to have these types of groups apply as partners.

Social Venture Partners

It was discussed that this organization mentioned partnering with another organization that had applied, Kairos, but Kairos did not list them as partners. One committee member did some digging and it seems the group lists many partners but the level of partnership is unclear. Concern was expressed that the application read as generic, like it was one more place to apply.

Sitton Elementary School

One committee member asked if we could follow up and ask what they could do with \$25,000 rather than the \$50,000 requested. It was discussed that the application was missing a budget and matching information and only was a brief narrative. It was also discussed that this particular playground is currently not in use, but two others on site are and was suggested that Sitton could consider seeking funding for its removal alone, not for rebuilding it.

Meals on Wheels

It was discussed that while it was a small amount requested (\$5,000) the application was focused on programming, not on capacity building and therefore was similar to previously funded applications received from this organization.

Latino Community Education Center

A concern was brought up that a large portion of the proposed budget (\$25,200) was to pay a professional service to scout locations while the second largest portion was to pay part of the Executive Director's salary. Concerns were expressed about whether this is the best approach for establishing this new center.

Friends of Baltimore Woods

It was discussed that this proposal was both in the spirit of the grant and North Portland specific. While the greenway is already receiving a lot of money from the fund, this project could do a lot to continue creating momentum for completing the trail between the Steel Bridge and Kelly Point Park. It was noted that this group has had two successful capital grants from Metro and has built a great volunteer capacity. This grant would help them build staff capacity. It was also noted that due to their location, this proposal is eligible for Central Enhancement grants, this could be another factor to consider.

George Middle School

More discussion, similar to that of the De La Salle application regarding concerns with funding technology investments in schools if they don't have a strong plan in place for integration and professional training for teachers. There was also concern expressed about the longevity of Chromebooks. This was identified as a group that could potentially benefit from coaching if invited to submit a full application to help them explore other technology options and prepare to seek funding through the MHRCR grants.

Through these discussions, the committee was able to narrow down the pool to 17 applicants requesting \$693,093 representing 117.67% of available funds, meeting the goal for the meeting.

General Questions for Invited Proposals to Consider

How would you (and/or would you) utilize a coach to help with your application?

For those requesting technology investments, how does this support capacity building? Also potentially, could you utilize a coach to help you strategize around this?

Discussion about coaching services

There was discussion throughout the meeting of how best to apply the funds set aside for coaching services to applicants. The original idea was for these funds to provide coaching to organizations in putting together a more detailed proposal. Since most of the applicants the committee plans to invite to submit full proposals are fairly sophisticated and established already, is this the best use of those funds? Another idea is to offer some coaching services to

those who were NOT selected but that the committee identified as having the potential to be funded through other opportunities. If all of the coaching funds are not utilized, they could be added into the available funds for grants.

Action Item: Add discussion of how to use coaching funds to next meeting agenda. Committee may also ask if finalists would utilize coaching as part of the questions included to address in their full applications. Committee may choose to revisit applications that were difficult to cut who may benefit from coaching and consider using any unused funds for that purpose.

Next steps

Because the committee was able to identify the finalists in this meeting, they will not meet in December. The next meeting will be scheduled for after final applications are submitted (date TBD). In the meantime several action items were identified that the committee will complete via email with support from Metro's grant program staff

Action Item: Metro Staff will compile the questions raised by the committee so far (this includes both general questions and questions for specific organizations) and send them to the committee for review. The committee members will review the finalist LOIs carefully to identify any additional questions and send them to Heather Nelson Kent. See attached.

Once the questions are finalized, Metro staff will notify all of those who submitted LOIs whether they have been invited to submit a full proposal or not and what specific questions need to be addressed in those full proposals. Until this time, committee members were asked not to discuss the decisions made tonight in the community.

Councilor Chase thanked the committee for their hard work and adjourned the meeting at 8:37 p.m.