



City of Sunnyvale

Agenda Item-No Attachments (PDF)

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REPORT TO COUNCIL

SUBJECT

Update on Response to Twin Pines Manor Fire

BACKGROUND

On Friday, April 15, a two-alarm fire occurred at Twin Pines Manor Apartments, an 81-unit apartment complex located at 1066 Sunnyvale-Saratoga Road in Sunnyvale. Seventy-six households were displaced from the building due to the damage caused by the fire. Sunnyvale staff and elected officials, the American Red Cross, Sunnyvale Community Services (SCS) staff, local volunteers and faith communities worked through that weekend to safely shelter the displaced families at the Sunnyvale Senior Center, followed by a transition to local motels beginning on April 17.

On April 19 (RTC 16-0422) Council committed \$150,000 in local funds for motel stays through May 8 and related costs; \$250,000 for rapid re-housing assistance, which can include security deposits, moving costs, and short- to mid-term rental assistance; and \$30,000 in Library and Recreation Program waivers. At that meeting, Council also directed staff to return to Council on May 3 with an update on the relocation efforts and a presentation from SCS on its progress in evaluating and addressing the needs of the displaced residents, and any additional staff recommendations related to this matter.

EXISTING POLICY

General Plan Safety Element

Policy SN-3.1 Provide rapid and timely response to all emergencies.

2015-2020 HUD Consolidated Plan

Goal B: Alleviation of Homelessness

Action 1.F: To the extent that local (non-HUD) funding is available for this purpose, provide funding for a Sunnyvale homelessness prevention and rapid re-housing program.

ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW

The actions being considered are exempt from the California Environmental Quality Act ("CEQA") pursuant to CEQA Guidelines section 15061 (b) (3) as the activity is covered by the general rule that CEQA applies only to projects which have the potential for causing a significant effect on the environment. Where it can be seen with certainty that there is no possibility that the activity in question may have a significant effect on the environment, the activity is not subject to CEQA.

DISCUSSION

As of April 26, various agencies had offered in-kind or financial assistance. The County of Santa Clara approved a grant of \$150,000 to SCS for rapid re-housing efforts on April 26, and the Silicon Valley Housing Trust has approved a grant of \$100,000 to SCS to assist the displaced families

through its “Finally Home” program, which is a rapid re-housing program. Private sector donations to date total to about \$140,000 for replacement of household items, initial move-in costs such as rent and security deposits, and/or motel stays. Downtown Streets Team (DST), West Valley Community Services, Mountain View Community Services Agency, Abode Services, and HomeFirst have contributed case management services, temporary housing units, and other in-kind support. Dozens of community and faith groups have donated time and resources. Local landlords and housing providers have offered rental units to the displaced tenants.

SCS has been working with the City, the County, the Red Cross, DST, and others to assist the displaced households with immediate needs and relocation. As part of the needs assessment process, SCS has determined that among the 168 residents who lived in Twin Pines Manor, there were 40 children aged 17 or younger, eight seniors aged 65 or older and 120 adults aged 18 to 64 years. Three of the tenants are veterans, and three other tenants have Section 8 rent vouchers from the Housing Authority, which means that they pay 30 percent of their monthly income on rent and the remainder is paid for by the Housing Authority with federal Section 8 subsidies. Generally voucher recipients have very low or extremely low incomes. The displaced households include families with babies and young children, and residents with chronic medical conditions. The displaced residents speak various languages including Cantonese, Farsi, German, Hindi, Mandarin, Korean, Spanish, Russian and English.

To date, the City has received invoices for nearly \$52,000 in motel expenses incurred between April 17 and April 24. These expenses are being paid for using the \$150,000 in local Housing funds approved by Council for motel stays through May 8. Staff expects to receive additional invoices soon for 13 rooms reserved at one additional motel. A total of 58 motel rooms in three hotels were booked for the first week to provide shelter to the displaced residents. In addition to the motel stays, approximately \$1,000 has been expended for initial emergency supplies such as food and water.

As of April 25, SCS had assisted 13 households in renting replacement dwellings, and had obtained transitional housing for five additional households. To meet the needs of those still in motels, SCS encourages monetary donations and gift cards for local casual, family-style restaurants, since the families cannot cook in the motels and dining out all the time is expensive, or for local stores such as Target for replacement of needed personal items. Donations of new or used furniture and other goods are not encouraged at this time, due to lack of storage and staff to process and distribute such items.

Entity	Amount	Purpose
City of Sunnyvale	\$150,000	Motel stays and immediate needs
City of Sunnyvale	\$250,000	Homeless Prevention and Rapid Re-housing (HPRR) Program (FY 2016-17 appropriation, in addition to current balance of approximately \$160,000)
City of Sunnyvale	\$30,000	Library / Recreation Waivers
Private Donations	\$110,000	Motels, replacement of personal items, furniture, security deposits, first/last month's rent

GoFundMe (City initiated, there are other GoFundMe efforts)	\$30,000	Replacement of personal items, furniture, food, etc.
County of Santa Clara	\$150,000	Rapid re-housing and case management
Housing Trust Silicon Valley	\$100,000	Rapid Re-housing (Finally Home)
Various Non-Profit Agencies	In-kind assistance	Case management, transitional housing, etc.
Total	\$820,000	

The appropriations made by City Council on April 19 as well as the commitments by other agencies, and the financial support and in-kind assistance from the community collectively amount to over \$800,000. In addition, SCS has been able to place 13 households in permanent housing, plus five in transitional housing within 10 days of the fire and continues to place families in rental housing. At this time, it is not yet clear what level of insurance proceeds from various parties, such as property owner coverage, or tenants' insurance for personal items, may become available to the tenants. It is difficult to estimate whether additional assistance will be needed beyond that already committed. Staff is monitoring the situation closely and is in contact with SCS on a daily basis. If it becomes apparent that additional City action is needed, staff will notify City Council.

An oral update to the above information will be provided at the City Council meeting.

FISCAL IMPACT

None.

PUBLIC CONTACT

Public contact was made by posting the Council agenda on the City's official-notice bulletin board outside City Hall, at the Sunnyvale Senior Center, Community Center and Department of Public Safety; and by making the agenda and report available at the Sunnyvale Public Library, the Office of the City Clerk and on the City's website.

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