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CONSENT CALENDAR
 March 10, 2020

To: The Honorable Mayor & Members of the City Council
 From: Councilmember Ben Bartlett, Councilmember Cheryl Davila,
 and Mayor Jesse Arreguin
 Subject: Siting the African American Holistic Resource Center and Affordable
 Housing at 1890 Alcatraz

RECOMMENDATION

That the City Council refers to the City Manager to study the feasibility of using the city-owned property located at 1890 Alcatraz Avenue (currently temporary Mental Health Division offices) for the African American Holistic Resource Center (AAHRC) and also developing affordable housing on the site. The City Manager should report back on the costs and implementation steps to repurpose the property for the AAHRC using the AAHRC Feasibility study as a guide, including what physical improvements would need to be made, and cost for ongoing operations by a non-profit. The City Manager and Planning Department should also conduct an analysis of potential site capacity looking at site context and yield and report on how much housing could be developed on the site under current zoning, including the AAHRC on the ground floor. Additionally, the City Manager and Planning Commission should incorporate the Community Preference policy in selecting applicants for the affordable housing units created by this project.

BACKGROUND

African American Holistic Resource Center

Members from the African American/Black Professional & Community Network (AABPCN) and Berkeley NAACP (BNAACP) have been advocating and leading efforts — in the city for the past 8 years — for the creation of the African American Holistic Resource Center (AAHRC). Members of the AABPCN shared the vision for the AAHRC and began gathering information from the community via focus groups, town hall meetings, small group discussions, and formal presentations to several Berkeley Commissions, the Berkeley City Council, and other stakeholder groups.

The 2016 City of Berkeley Community Health Commission report strongly recommends that the City of Berkeley “take immediate action steps towards the development and support of the African American Holistic Resource Center in South Berkeley”¹. The Peace and Justice Commission also submitted a letter of support to the City Council. Following the commission reports and community advocacy, councilmembers responded with overwhelming support for the development of the AAHRC, and they

¹ Kwanele, Babalwa, and Barbara A. White. 2018. *African American Holistic Resource Center FEASIBILITY STUDY*. Research Study, Berkeley: Neguse Consulting

allocated funding for a feasibility study, as well as other required activities needed for the establishment of the facility.

The City Manager supported the AAHRC project by adding the African American Holistic Resource Center in the City of Berkeley's Strategic Work Plan; the AAHRC is also included in the Mayor's and the District 3 Councilmember's work plans. In February of 2018, the Department of Health, Housing, and Community Services provided funding to start the AAHRC feasibility study and signed a contract with a consultant to collaborate with members of the AAHRC Steering Committee to complete the AAHRC feasibility study. In 2019, the findings were released.

Right to Return

Minority groups in Berkeley have been, and continue to be, pushed out of the neighborhoods in which they live. Such displacement has a long-term negative impact on Black residents in the City of Berkeley and the entire citizenship in the city. Right to Return policies allow those who are evicted as a result of rent increases or new developments to return to the areas from which they were displaced, consistent with the Fair Housing Act.

Community Preference Policies

Community preference policies work to prioritize former residents of gentrified neighborhoods and low-income individuals in affordable housing decisions. As of today, the City of Berkeley does not operate any housing or participate in the review of applicants for affordable units. Rather, each individual property has the autonomy to seek out and select applicants for their affordable units, in addition to maintaining their own waitlists. Currently, preferences are available for seniors, those with special needs (defined as those with a documented mental, physical, or psychological disability), families, and people emerging from homelessness. It is important to distinguish community preference policies, which give priority to these applicants, from policies that guarantee housing.

CURRENT SITUATION

The results from the feasibility study recommend a series of steps to develop the AAHRC, which include:

- (1) acquiring professional expertise in the areas of funding and building design
- (2) securing a physical location for the AAHRC
- (3) beginning a fundraising campaign
- (4) starting marketing and promotions, and
- (5) continuing community engagement.

In the Adeline Corridor draft plan, the City of Berkeley aspires to convert many of the areas surrounding Adeline Way into affordable housing, hoping that at least 50% of the housing projects will be affordable. Some of the buildings around that area are publicly owned, but many others are privately owned. In order to ensure that we achieve our goal in maximizing affordable housing, the city should demolish and repurpose the

city-owned building located at 1890 Alcatraz Ave. As the facility is currently used by Berkeley Mental Health until their clinic is completed within 6 months, the building should later be developed into the African American Holistic Resource Center, with affordable housing and neighborhood preferences on top. Such preferences mean that previous residents who were displaced out of this neighborhood have a higher chance of living in one of these units. Therefore, it is in the City's best interest to repurpose the use of this property for the AAHRC and low-income housing.

REVIEW OF EXISTING PLANS, PROGRAMS, POLICIES, AND LAWS

The plan is to have the AAHRC be a state-of-the-art, green building between 5,000-6,000 square feet that includes the following features:

- Ecologically responsible building with plenty of natural light
- Two classrooms
- Multipurpose room with dividing wall (seating for 250)
- Dance studio
- Library (will have spaces for the South Berkeley Legacy Project and a children's section)
- Children's playroom/game room
- Computer lab
- Classroom kitchen
- Medical screening room
- Two private therapy rooms
- Lockers in hallway
- Utility room
- Four bathrooms (one with a shower)
- Reception/waiting area
- Built-in projectors and AV equipment in classrooms, multipurpose room and library
- Facility completely ADA compliant

There are two existing potential blueprints that support plans for the AAHRC. The first blueprint houses everything on one main floor, and the second blueprint breaks up the design into two floors.²

RATIONALE FOR RECOMMENDATION

The African American/Black community in Berkeley has the highest rate of morbidity and mortality of any racial/ethnic group. According to the City of Berkeley's Health Status Summary Report 2018, "African Americans are 2.3 times more likely to die in a given year from any condition compared to Whites". The report further indicates that "The risk of an African American mother having a low-birth weight (LBW) rate baby is 2.5 times higher than the risk for White mothers".³

² Kwanele, Babalwa, and Barbara A. White. 2018. *African American Holistic Resource Center FEASIBILITY STUDY*. Research Study, Berkeley: Neguse Consulting

³ Kwanele, Babalwa, and Barbara A. White. 2018. *African American Holistic Resource Center FEASIBILITY STUDY*. Research Study, Berkeley: Neguse Consulting

In comparing 2013 and 2018 COB Health Status Summary Reports, the rate of poverty among African American families has quadrupled. During a five-year period the poverty rate for African Americans has gone from two times more likely to live in poverty to eight times more likely to live in poverty in the City of Berkeley. It is well documented that poverty is linked to poor health outcomes and a shorter life expectancy. Unfortunately even without the role of poverty, middle class and affluent Black people's health is worse compared to their white counterparts in Berkeley.

Preliminary research of African American/Black Resource Centers nationwide found that most centers are located on college campuses or affiliated with colleges and universities. The few African American/Black Resource Centers that are not located on or in partnership with a college or university are membership-based organizations. Having a resource center in the City of Berkeley that is accessible to all black communities is vital because the feasibility study found that various inequities disproportionately impact the health, wealth, education, and safety of African Americans across their lifespan. These inequalities include, but are not limited to, birth outcomes, morbidity and mortality rates, which indicates that they are not thriving in the City of Berkeley. Culturally appropriate integrated services and community-defined practices that are embedded in the creation of a holistic system of care must be developed, or the Black population will continue to decline.

Furthermore, the expansion of affordable housing provided by this project is crucial to ensuring the vitality of the Black community in Berkeley. As gentrification continuously pushes Black people and other people of color out of the City, including some long-term residents who maintain employment in Berkeley, the city becomes less inclusive. Right to Return policies allow those who have been displaced by gentrification to return to their home neighborhoods and thus, upholds Berkeley's status as a diverse and welcoming city.

ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY

The building would meet the requirements of the California State Green Building Code (CALGreen). This will ensure that the building maximizes savings through the efficient use of energy and water and limit construction impacts on the natural environment and the surrounding community.

If contaminants are found on the property during demolition and/or reconstruction, then a mitigation process must be determined to ensure that the construction team and building occupants are not affected. Also, according to Proposition 65, it is mandatory to warn individuals who live or work in or near a contaminated property or land about the risks associated with carcinogens and/or other health-related risks. In addition, the property must pass the Alameda County's Environmental Health Agency's regulations for land use. The reconstruction of this building will comply with all these standards.

FISCAL IMPACTS

Building the AAHRC has a number of different fiscal impacts. The exact cost of demolishing the existing building and constructing the new building has yet to be determined. The current estimated costs to renovate the AAHRC facility range from \$300 per square foot to \$380 per square foot. A projected space of 5,000-5,700 square feet to be used to develop the building will have a construction budget that ranges between approximately \$1.6 million to \$2 million. The estimated cost to build affordable housing units above the AAHRC is about \$600,000 per unit.⁴ Other costs associated with permits and meeting regulation standards may apply.

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⁴ Cortright, Joe. 2017. "Why Is 'Affordable' Housing So Expensive to Build?" *City Lab*. 19 Oct. Accessed Aug. 19, 2019. <https://www.citylab.com/equity/2017/10/why-is-affordable-housing-so-expensive-to-build/543399/>

