

City of Takoma Park, Maryland  
**GRANTS REVIEW COMMITTEE**  
**MINUTES**

---

**DATE:** Thursday, March 7, 2019  
**TIME:** 7:30 p.m. to 9:00 p.m.  
**LOCATION:** Takoma Park Community Center-Sam Abbott Citizen's Center  
Atrium Room, 3<sup>rd</sup> Fl., 7500 Maple Avenue, Takoma Park

---

**Members Present:** Nadine Bloch, Rachel Branaman, Jay Keller, Lesley Perry, Susan Rosenblum, Mark Rupp  
**Members Absent:** Simeon Tarawali  
**Staff Present:** Grayce Wiggins, Housing Manager; Jennifer Hale, Grants Coordinator, Department of Housing and Community Development

1. Call to Order and Welcome

Jennifer called the meeting to order at 7:40 PM and welcomed the members of the committee. The members of the committee introduced themselves.

2. Adoption of Minutes

Jay Keller moved to adopt the minutes of the January 17 meeting. The motion was seconded by Nadine Block.

3. Housekeeping

Nadine Block presented on a new technique for shared note-taking and the creation of minutes. Nadine set up a shared document in Google Docs and shared it via email with the Committee.

Moving forward, at each meeting, at least one person will be designated per meeting to be primary note taker, and every member will have access to the document and can correct and contribute to the notes in real time.

It was agreed that notes will focus on items that are actionable, require follow up, and are voting items.

4. FY20 Community Grants Cycle

- a. Update
  - i. Applications

Jennifer updated the members of the committee about the LOI submissions. Committee learned that the applicants increased by 42% this year over last year; seven (7) were first-time applicants; and of the 22 applicants who completed an LOI, 20 are 501(c)(3)s (or working with one as a fiscal sponsor) and two (2) are business associations.

Jennifer reminded the committee of the grant making schedule.

Jennifer then discussed the on-going need to create metrics to demonstrate the value of the Community Grants program. It was mentioned that the City needs to be recognized by the Grantees with logos, recognition language, #hashtag, etc. It was suggested that Grantees be invited to speak at a City Council Meeting(s) and that Council Members be invited to more grantee events.

The Committee asked questions about funding levels for FY20. City staff provided information on the process as it is understood.

Members discussed if it would be helpful to change the timing of grant program so that funding levels are set prior to commitments being made. This was shelved for future consideration as the calendar is set for this year.

It was suggested that moving forward City staff collect information on how applicants learn about our programs by asking when they attend or register for events and by also adding a question in the application.

- b. Review and Approve Roster of Selected Applicants

Jennifer presented a summary of all LOIs and staff recommendations for which LOIs to invite to the full application stage. After discussion, the Committee agreed to move the list of recommended LOIs to the full application stage.

## 5. Grant Reviewing

Jennifer Hale then presented a demonstration on how to review applications in the new grant review environment which uses Foundant online grant life-cycle management software. It was confirmed that all members had received their logon credentials for the system.

- a. Discussion of draft review rubric (provided via dropbox)

Committee members then reviewed the draft scoring rubric and it was suggested that Jennifer add additional questions based on the previous year's scoring guide.

6. Decision Making and Council Priorities (20 mins)

- a. Review DRAFT Council Priorities (provided via dropbox)

Grayce Wiggins discussed Housing and Economic Development as top priority for the City Council and directed the Committee to the Draft Council Priorities that had previously been provided.

- b. Jay Keller on *What's My Bias* training

Jay Keller discussed his experience with the What's My Bias trainings. Jay recently completed this program with other city stakeholders, including Grayce Wiggins. Jay discussed how he will take these lessons into the community and how it could be useful for this Committee. Racial equity and the City's Racial Equity statement were mentioned as a key part of decision making.

7. Next GRC Meeting Agenda Items (10 mins)

Jennifer gave a preview of the next meeting on May 9. By this meeting, the Committee will have scored all the applications and should be ready to discuss and make funding recommendations.

It was suggested that the May 9 meeting, be expanded to 7:00 PM – 9:30 PM so that the Committee can have more time to discuss the applications.

8. Adjourn

Adjourn Meeting adjourned at 9:40 pm.

Respectfully Submitted: Jennifer Hale, Department of Housing and Community Development