

Cotati City Council

Agenda Staff Report

Item type: CONSENT CALENDAR (ACTION)
To: City Council
Subject: Joint Powers Agreement among Sonoma County Community Development Commission, the Town of Windsor and the Cities of Cloverdale, Cotati, Healdsburg, Rohnert Park, Sebastopol and Sonoma for Matters Related to Housing and Community Development
Date: August 22, 2017
Written by: Vicki Parker, Community Development Director

Recommendation

It is recommended that the City Council adopt a resolution approving the form and content of the Joint Powers Agreement among Sonoma County Community Development Commission, the Town of Windsor and the Cities of Cloverdale, Cotati, Healdsburg, Rohnert Park, Sebastopol and Sonoma for Matters Related to Housing and Community Development.

Background

The City of Cotati has, in the past, participated jointly with Sonoma County, the Town of Windsor and the Cities of Cloverdale, Healdsburg, Rohnert Park, Sebastopol and Sonoma in an agreement to qualify for a variety of federal block grant programs. The rights and responsibilities of the participating agencies have been detailed and agreed to via a Joint Powers Agreement (JPA) executed by the City Managers of each jurisdiction. The most recent agreement was signed in 2009, with an amendment in 2014.

Analysis/Discussion

The federal department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) administers a variety of grant programs geared toward community development and assistance for lower income households. Some of the most familiar of these programs are Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) and Section 8 housing voucher programs. Other programs which the region has taken advantage of include HOME Investment Partnership which is the largest block grant program created to provide affordable housing for low income households through assistance with building, buying or rehabilitating existing units or direct rental assistance, and more recently, the addition of HEARTH Act programs which target the needs of homeless populations by funding efforts such as outreach, emergency shelter, prevention and rapid rehousing.

Joint participation of the smaller agencies with the County enables a more efficient administration of all HUD grants and programs. Administration costs of federal grants can often be more expensive than the actual grant award as the record keeping and reporting requirements are significant. In the case of these federal grant programs, the Community Development Commission (CDC) completes the required Consolidated Plan every 5 years as required by law and administers jurisdictions' individual projects through a single grant, thereby reducing the reporting required for each project. A Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) is established of representatives from all member jurisdictions. Annually, the TAC evaluates program guidelines and priorities and establishes the list of individual projects to be recommended for grant awards by the Sonoma County Board of Supervisors.

This year, as CDC staff began to prepare for the new funding cycle, they were advised that an updated JPA agreement would be necessary in order to remain eligible. CDC staff sent the 2005 agreement out to all member jurisdictions for review, as well as requesting review from County Counsel and HUD. The proposed agreement attached to the resolution is the final agreement which has been reviewed and edited by all member agencies and HUD. The edits were relatively minor in nature, updating references and strengthening language around audits, remittance of any program income and a commitment to the rules of fair housing law. An underline/strikeout version of the agreement is attached to this staff report for your information as Attachment A.

Staff believes continued participation in the JPA is the most efficient and effective means for the City to remain eligible for federal block grant awards and therefore recommends the Council approve the edited agreement and authorize the City Manager to execute on behalf of the City.

Financial Considerations

Staff time to review and edit the draft agreement and bring it to Council has been absorbed by the Community Development Department's operating budget. Costs associated with individual grant proposals which may result from the City's participation in any of the federal grants would be detailed and evaluated by the Council annually when authorizing the City's participation in the CDBG program.

Environmental Issues

This action is exempt from the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) because it is not a project which has a potential for resulting in either a direct physical change in the environment, or a reasonably foreseeable indirect physical change in the environment, pursuant to CEQA Guideline section 15378.

Attachments:

Attachment A - JPA Mark Up Version (PDF)