



Agenda Item No. _____

File Code No. 660.04

CITY OF SANTA BARBARA

COUNCIL AGENDA REPORT

AGENDA DATE: April 26, 2011

TO: Mayor and Councilmembers

FROM: Housing and Redevelopment Division, Community Development Department

SUBJECT: 2904 State Street Lease By Housing Authority To WillBridge

RECOMMENDATION:

That Council approve the leasing of the affordable rental property at 2904 State Street by the Housing Authority to WillBridge for use as transitional housing for formerly homeless persons.

DISCUSSION:

On January 25, 2011 Council approved a grant of \$1,150,000 in Redevelopment Agency Housing Setaside Funds to the Housing Authority of the City of Santa Barbara for the acquisition of 2904 State Street for use as affordable housing for formerly homeless individuals. The Housing Authority stated its intention to lease the entire eight-unit property to a local non-profit such as WillBridge or Transition House. The following week, on February 1, 2011, the item was brought back to Council for reconsideration after some Councilmembers heard concern expressed about whether such use was appropriate given the site's location near Peabody School. After a public hearing, Council voted to affirm the grant approval, but to add the condition that the Housing Authority hold up to three public meetings with concerned parents and neighbors and return to Council for a determination as to whether the property could be leased to WillBridge or, instead, used for conventional low income housing.

As explained in the attached letter from the Housing Authority, the Housing Authority held three such meetings and reached a consensus from the attendees that the lease to WillBridge could go forward. Therefore, staff recommends that Council allow the lease to WillBridge as requested.

ATTACHMENT: Letter from the Housing Authority

PREPARED BY: Brian Bosse, Housing and Redevelopment Manager / SBF

SUBMITTED BY: Paul Casey, Assistant City Administrator/Community Development Director

APPROVED BY: City Administrator's Office



HOUSING

AUTHORITY OF THE
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April 12, 2011

Steven Faulstich, Housing Programs Supervisor
Housing & Redevelopment Division
630 Garden Street
Santa Barbara CA 93101

**RE: REQUEST FOR CITY COUNCIL TO GIVE FINAL CONSIDERATION OF THE HOUSING AUTHORITY'S
INTENDED USE OF 2904 STATE STREET**

Dear Steven,

As you know, at the February 1, 2011 City Council Meeting the City Council/RDA Board reaffirmed their January 25, 2011 decision to grant the Housing Authority funds to purchase 2904 State Street. This grant was conditioned with a requirement that the Housing Authority hold up to three community meetings in order to better inform the surrounding neighbors and the Peabody School parents as to the Authority's intended use of the property with Willbridge as the operator. The purpose of these meetings was to also take input from interested parties and to address their concerns. The Housing Authority was requested to hold up to three meetings and then report back to the City within 90 days at which time the Council would consider whether the Housing Authority's planned leasing of the property to Willbridge would move forward or if the Authority would operate the property as part of its low income housing portfolio.

Immediately after the City Council Meeting, Kate Ford, the Principal of Peabody Charter School, Rob Pearson, the Housing Authority Executive Director and Lynnelle Williams the Executive Director of WillBridge, began formation of an initial steering committee to meet and vet out the issues. The Steering Committee was comprised of a fairly equal number of concerned Peabody School parents, a few concerned neighborhood residents and others who supported and endorsed the project.

I am pleased to report that the three meetings were held as follows:

- Meeting #1: Monday February 28, 2011 (Steering Committee Meeting)

During this meeting the Housing Authority reviewed its mission, vision and operations and reviewed our options for use of 2904 State Street. WillBridge also reviewed their Mission, current operations and how they would operate 2904 State Street under their permanent supportive housing program including program rules, guidelines and the tenant selection process. The Housing Authority and WillBridge also heard concerns from those in attendance concerning the intended use of the property.

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- Meeting #2: Monday, March 21, 2011 (Larger Community Meeting)

During this meeting, the Housing Authority and WillBridge gave a brief review of their respective operations and their planned use of 2904 State Street as permanent supportive housing. The balance of the meeting was devoted to hearing the concerns of Peabody School parents and neighbors and offering constructive input as to how the property would be managed. As a result of concerns brought forward during the first scheduled meeting, Willbridge developed and provided a Frequently Asked Questions Fact Sheet for all participants (see Exhibit A). This FAQ sheet allayed many of the outstanding concerns.

- Meeting #3: Monday, April 11, 2011 (Steering Committee Meeting)

The Steering Committee reconvened following the larger community meeting to review the Housing Authority's Master Lease Agreement and the accompanying program rules. The Housing Authority and WillBridge committed to being a good neighbor and to being responsive with regard to issues that may arise due to their operation of the property. The meeting was productive and a consensus was reached to have Willbridge move forward as the program operator for the property with the conditions noted in the minutes from the meeting attached as Exhibit B.

This outreach process was beneficial to all parties. There is now a better understanding of the community's concerns by Willbridge and the Housing Authority; and inversely, the community now has a better understanding of the intended use of the property and a better knowledge of both the Housing Authority's and WillBridge's operations.

As the outreach process has been concluded and a consensus has been reached, I would like to request that this item be put on the City Council's agenda for their April 26, 2011 meeting for final approval of the project and lease to WillBridge.

Sincerely,

HOUSING AUTHORITY OF THE
CITY OF SANTA BARBARA



ROB FREDERICKS
Deputy Executive Director/CAO

cc: Robert Pearson, Executive Director/CEO, Housing Authority
Housing Authority Commission

WillBridge - 2904 State Street Permanent Supportive Housing Program? FAQ's

Questions:

1. **What is the WillBridge Permanent Supportive Housing Program?**
2. **Is this a homeless shelter?**
3. **Will clients loiter on the streets, panhandle, be aggressive with neighbors or otherwise be a neighborhood nuisance?**
4. **What is the profile of the client?**
5. **How are clients selected?**
6. **How is this program different from low income housing? Work Force Housing?**
7. **Is the State Street facility well suited for workforce housing use?**
8. **Are Criminal Background checks performed on all applicants?**
9. **Are Sex-Offenders or those convicted of violent crimes allowed in the program?**
10. **Is alcohol or drug use or possession by clients allowed anywhere, anytime?**
11. **Do you perform random drug/alcohol testing?**
12. **What if a client fails these drug/alcohol tests?**
13. **Are we willing to make our answers to questions 8 through 13 part of our lease with the Housing Authority?**
14. **Are there strict "Program Rules" to assure clients' behavior creates a positive environment for themselves, other program participants and neighbors? What are they?**
15. **Will there be Medical Respite or Detox beds in this facility?**
16. **How is this project funded?**
17. **What happens if the HUD funding is not renewed?**
18. **What happens if WillBridge does not enforce its client "Program Rules" or is otherwise not a good neighbor?**
19. **What can I do, as a neighbor, if I have a problem with WillBridge?**
20. **Will there be kitchens in the rooms?**
21. **Who is responsible for the maintenance of the building and grounds?**
22. **Who is WillBridge?**
23. **What is WillBridge's track record with its neighbors?**
24. **Will families or children be allowed in the program?**
25. **Can WillBridge help the community deal with problem homeless who are already in the neighborhood and who may be of concern to neighbors?**
26. **Why is the WillBridge Permanent Supportive Housing Program a good choice for a neighbor?**

Answers:

1. **What is the WillBridge Permanent Supportive Housing Program?**
Permanent Supportive Housing provides, in addition to shelter, case management and counseling support to individuals who are moving from homelessness to independent living. They learn or re-learn skills to allow them to fully function independently.

2. **Is this a homeless shelter?**

No. This is a residential facility. Clients will be part of a long term program designed to allow them to progress, in time, to fully independent living. All clients will have come from a transitional housing facility, not from the streets, and will have demonstrated an ability and willingness to live more independently.

3. **Will clients loiter on the streets, panhandle, be aggressive with neighbors or otherwise be a neighborhood nuisance?**

No. Clients will either be employed or part of a school or training program. They do not want to and will not loiter, panhandle, be aggressive or a nuisance with neighbors. While this has not been an issue with WillBridge's other permanent supportive housing program, should a client do these things, it will be cause for their removal from the program.

4. **What is the profile of the client?**

These are people who want to live independently and try to rebuild their lives. They will have lived in a transitional housing facility, demonstrated that they are able and motivated to greater independent living, have recommendations (including one from their doctor) and will be employed or in a training program. If they have a mental illness, it will be controlled with medication and counseling.

The clients must be willing to work with a counselor and/or mentor and be willing to perform some form of community service.

5. **How are clients selected?**

There is a rigorous questionnaire (copy linked to the Peabody School website for review) establishing clients readiness for the program, including essay questions on why they are ready to move to more independent living; recommendations; income and background verification, and personal interviews.

6. **How is this program different from low income housing? Work Force Housing?**

While there are many differences, the most visible in this case are that WillBridge can impose greater restrictions on clients in this program than a landlord can impose on tenants. We can and will remove clients who do not comply with WillBridge or Housing Authority rules.

WillBridge provides on-site oversight 24/7, which is not a part of a normal landlord-tenant relationship.

7. **Is the State Street facility well suited for workforce housing use?**

Not really. The rooms are very small (175 to 225 sq. ft.), and most potential workforce housing clients would not find this adequate accommodation.

8. **Are Criminal Background checks performed on all applicants?**

Yes. The Housing Authority performs criminal background checks for all its clients and will do so for WillBridge.

9. **Are Sex-Offenders or those convicted of violent crimes allowed in the program?**

No, with no exceptions!

10. **Is alcohol or drug use or possession by clients allowed anywhere, anytime?**

No. Clients are not permitted to consume or possess alcohol or drugs of any kind (other than those prescribed by their doctor) . WillBridge conducts random drug screening to assure compliance. Violators are removed from the program.

- 11. Do you perform random drug/alcohol testing?**
Yes. See question 10.
- 12. What if a client fails these drug/alcohol tests?**
Client is removed from the program. See Question 10.
- 13. Are we willing to make our answers to questions 8 through 13 part of our lease with the Housing Authority?**
Yes, we will incorporate these as program requirements in the lease.
- 14. Are there strict "Program Rules" to assure clients' behavior creates a positive environment for themselves, other program participants and neighbors? What are they?**
Yes. Clients are required to sign that they will abide by all programs rules. These rules are designed to ensure that the environment of the program is conducive to clients progressing to more independent living. A copy of program rules is linked to the Peabody School website for your review. Also, these rules are part of our master lease with the Housing Authority. Should WillBridge not enforce these rules, the Housing Authority can terminate our lease.
- 15. Will there be Medical Respite or Detox beds in this facility.**
No.
- 16. How is this project funded?**
WillBridge is the recipient of a 2 year \$123,000 HUD grant that requires at least \$35,000 in outside matching funds. This will be sufficient to fully fund the program. We have applied to a local foundation for the matching funds, but can do so out of our own resources if we do not obtain the private foundation funding. The HUD grants usually renew if program goals (client progress among other things) are met.
- 17. What happens if the HUD funding is not renewed?**
WillBridge would try to obtain necessary funding from other sources, but should we not have funds to continue, our lease with the Housing Authority would terminate and they would use the property for other programs or purposes.
- 18. What happens if WillBridge does not enforce its client "program Rules" or is otherwise not a good neighbor?**
It is not in our interests to have unhappy neighbors, so we will do our best to avoid any unfavorable situation with the neighbors. However, the Housing Authority can terminate our master lease for failure to meet their requirements or our failure to implement our own rules.
- 19. What can I do, as a neighbor, if I have a problem with WillBridge?**
First, call the WillBridge Office (805-563-1911) and register your concerns with Executive Director Lynnelle Williams so we can address your concerns. Failing that, call the Housing Authority, (805-965-1071) and make your concerns known.
- 20. Will there be kitchens in the rooms?**
There will be a refrigerator, microwave, kitchen sink and cabinets. Stoves will not be allowed in the client rooms.
- 21. Who is responsible for the maintenance of the building and grounds?**
WillBridge is responsible for maintaining the grounds and the Housing Authority is responsible for maintaining the building. If WillBridge does not maintain the grounds adequately, the Housing authority has the right to step in and do it and should WillBridge continue to fail to do an

adequate job the Housing Authority can terminate our lease. The Housing Authority, a governmental agency, has a long track record of maintaining its facilities in excellent condition.

22. Who is WillBridge?

WillBridge is a non-profit formed in 2005 to provide shelter to mentally ill homeless adults. As part of this mission, WillBridge provides permanent supportive housing for clients that are ready to graduate to more independent living and outreach services to connect homeless adults on the streets to medical and social services.

23. What is WillBridge's track record with its neighbors?

WillBridge has been a good neighbor and wishes to continue to be so.

WillBridge has operated a permanent supportive housing facility at 18 E Sola Street since early 2009, and has never had an incident with neighbors. We have a letter from our neighbor, Our Lady of Sorrows Roman Catholic Church attesting to this. WillBridge has operated a Transitional Housing facility (for individuals first coming off the streets) at 1213 and 1215 Montecito Street for more than 6 years. We have had no complaints from neighbors. This facility is within 2 blocks of Franklin School, and there has never been an incident with students, faculty or staff. We have a letter from the School's Vice-Principal attesting to this.

24. Will families or children be allowed in the program?

No. The program is for single adults.

25. Can WillBridge help the community deal with problem homeless who are already in the neighborhood and who may be of concern to neighbors?

WillBridge has an outreach program, in which a case worker and a client go out on the street and make contact with the homeless and try to give them access to community resources and help start a relationship of trust that over time may result in the homeless person coming "inside" to a transitional housing facility. While no substitute for police, WillBridge is willing, in response to neighbor requests, to try and make contact with homeless people in the neighborhood and help mitigate any problem they may cause.

26. Why is the WillBridge Permanent Supportive Housing Program a good choice of neighbors?

WillBridge will carefully select all clients, operate a drug and alcohol free facility, conduct random drugs and alcohol tests, perform criminal background checks, demand compliance with "program rules", remove non-compliant clients from the program immediately, provide on-site supervision 24/7, provide neighbors with a who to call number in the event of a complaint, and , through WillBridge's outreach program, provide an additional mechanism for neighbors to deal with problem homeless people in the neighborhood. This type of selection, ongoing monitoring, and "program requirements" rather than tenancy requirements give WillBridge much more flexibility in dealing with issues than what the Housing Authority (or any landlord for that matter) must navigate in the world of "landlord-tenant" law that govern the operation of rental housing.

2904 State Street Steering Committee Meeting

Minutes for Monday, April 11, 2011

5:30-6:30 PM

Peabody Library

Committee Members:

Kate Ford	Joe Andrulaitis	Joe & Laurie Tumbler
Rob Pearson	Jay Caplan	Andrea Fink
Lynnelle Williams	Janice Brown	Bob Casey
Rob Fredericks	Rob Dayton	
Sven Klein	Kathleen Baushke	
Michael Fauver	Dale Swanson	
Matt Walker	Stephanie Smagala	
Mari Mender	Don Olson	

1. The meeting commenced at 5:30 PM.
2. The Steering Committee discussed steps towards meaningful accountability and community approval of WillBridge. Consensus was reached on the following process:
 - a. If there are concerns, Lynnelle Williams will be called.
 - b. If there is no or an unacceptable response, the Housing Authority will be called.
 - c. The City Council will become involved if the Housing Authority is unresponsive.
 - d. In the spirit of goodwill and a positive connection between the community and WillBridge, Kate Ford and Lynnelle Williams will meet and discuss successes every 4-6 months, with a follow-up email to the San Roque Community. Mari Mender will assist in this.
3. The Steering Committee discussed the selection process for residents, focusing on the formation of an Interview Committee. WillBridge has committed to include two community members on this committee. Potential members should have experience working in/with social services, the homeless, disenfranchised populations, and/or the mental health field. The Interview Committee is approximately a 15 hour time commitment. Lynnelle Williams confirmed that priority would be given to qualified San Roque residents. Anyone with this experience should contact Lynnelle Williams ASAP if interested.
4. The Steering Committee discussed and agreed to the timeline for 2904 State Street as follows:
 - a. Report by the Housing Authority to the City Council on April 19. Michael Fauver and perhaps other members of this Steering Committee will also speak.
 - b. City Council Approval of WillBridge on May 3.
 - c. HUD document submission and Interview Process in May 2011.
 - d. Occupancy in June 2011.
5. The Committee adjourned at 6:35 PM.

Wording of the Motion as approved unanimously by the City Council on 2-1-11:

Councilmembers Francisco/Rowse to reaffirm the decision of January 25, and to add a condition that the Housing Authority hold up to three community meetings and report back to the Council within 90 days, at which time the Council will consider whether the agreement with WillBridge will move forward or if the nature of the project will be a low income housing.