A. CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order by Chairperson Bob Farrar at 5:13 p.m.

B. ROLL CALL

Roll call was taken.

C. COMMUNICATIONS

None.

D. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Chair Farrar asked if there was a motion for approval of minutes of August 12, 2015.

MOTION: Commissioner Hardie made a motion to approve the HCDC meeting minutes of August 12, 2015.
SECONDED: Vice-Chair Fiske
AYES: Chair Farrar, Vice-Chair Fiske, and Commissioners Cox and Hardie
NOES: None
ABSTAIN: None
E. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

MOTION: Vice-Chair Fiske made a motion to approve the agenda for the HCDC meeting of September 9, 2015.
SECONDED: Commissioner Cox
AYES: Chair Farrar, Vice-Chair Fiske, Commissioners Cox and Hardie
NOES: None
ABSTAIN: None

F. GENERAL ADMINISTRATION

   (No action will be taken by the Commission.)

Chair Farrar reminded that there would be no public comment on the item since it’s a workshop. He stated that any comments on the CAPER would be included in the final version if received on or before Friday, September 18, 2015.

Ms. Jennifer Clark, Director of Development and Resource Management, gave introductory statements about the Consolidated Annual Performance and Evaluation Report (CAPER), stating a PowerPoint would be presented for the last fiscal year. The CAPER is currently in draft form, not a final document, and at the current time is posted for public review prior to submittal to HUD for their approval. This is the last year of the Consolidated Plan, and the format is in transition from prior year documents. She explained that the document is prepared annually to inform HUD and the public of the status of the program funds, evaluates and looks at what the City said they were going to do, and what they actually did during the period July 1, 2014 through June 30, 2015. The formula programs in the CAPER include CDBG, HOME, ESG, and HOPWA. A summary of the Consolidated Plan goals, an overview of the approved Annual Action Plan budget, a listing of the projects that were completed, or underway as of June 30th, are included. During the 15-day public review period, from September 3 through September 18, 2015, the public can provide comments, which are subsequently included with the report. She listed the locations to view the report.

Mr. Joe Trujillo, Housing and Community Development Division Manager, gave a PowerPoint presentation, stating that he would break down each of the established priorities from the 2010 - 2014 ConPlan and identify a few of the accomplishments. The General Housing Plan identified four priorities: 1) New construction of affordable housing, wherein 113 units of rental housing were completed, and construction started on 45 units of rental housing, as well as nine units of owner-occupied housing. 2) Housing rehabilitation and acquisition work commenced on 233 units of existing substandard rental housing, and 19 units of existing substandard owner-occupied housing. 3) Residential displacement and relocation – 1644 housing cases related to safety were initiated, and revitalization assessments were completed in two neighborhoods, Eldorado Park and Yokomi. Additionally, lead paint was remediated in 42 homes with children under the age of six; 4) Planning work in southwest Fresno was initiated, and planning in southeast Fresno was identified to implement the General Plan.

Mr. Trujillo gave examples of projects that were committed in prior years and carried over into the current year, as is typical for projects that are not completed, sometimes due to the size and complexity, funding, and construction timelines. Sierra Gateway II was completed in December of
2014, three years after the award of the HOME funds. The City View Project was another, which included the acquisition, demolition, and construction of 45 units in the Droge Building. The Viking Village was a major rehabilitation of 40 units of affordable family rental housing. The contract began in September, 2013 and was completed in July of 2015. Under contract in September, 2013, the Cedar Courts Project is a major rehabilitation of two affordable rental housing complexes, totaling 193 units, which is nearing completion. Fultonia West/Cedar Heights is a scattered-site new construction project that was contracted in September of 2013, and as of July 1, 2015 this project was 40 percent complete. The two sites will provide a total of 45 units of affordable rental housing.

He addressed Non-Housing Community Development Plan accomplishments. There was completion of work in seven park facilities, and reconstruction, 11 street segments, including curb, gutter, sidewalk and cross-walks, as well as the commencement of eight additional street segments. Additional investments of non-HUD funds included $1.3 million in Prop 1-C funds for park facility improvements. The graffiti abated was a total of 1.8 million square feet.

Mr. Trujillo detailed some of the projects completed at Holmes Playground, Chandler Park, Frank H. Ball Park, Mary Ella Brown Community Center, Mosqueda Community Center, Pinedale Community Center, Romain Neighborhood Center, and Ted C. Wills Park. He said some planned projects were not completed due to time constraints, and those will be re-evaluated and possibly completed with new allocations in the upcoming year. He said sometimes projects are identified in the budget by name, while others are grouped into the Neighborhood Street Improvement Program. All are typically multi-year in nature due to environmental clearance, engineering, bidding, and construction work that is necessary. Almy and Roy streets are currently undergoing right-of-way acquisition. He pointed out that Graffiti removal is one of the City’s best tools to deter crime, remove blight, and improve neighborhoods. Based upon the success rate of the program, nearly 98 percent of all graffiti is removed within 24 hours.

He explained the Anti-Poverty Plan’s three priorities: 1) Emergency shelter and transitional housing, prevention of homelessness, and permanent housing for homeless; 2) External support and coordination of services; 3) Economic development. He stated that the City funds just some of the many activities in the community around the issues of homelessness. $5 million is received annually by local service agencies which have partnered to reduce chronic homelessness. The MAP Point at Poverello House serves as a one-stop shop for all of the partners in the Coordinated Access and Housing Matching.

He recognized the PARCS After School Program, which is designed to provide a safe environment for youth to participate in recreational and service-oriented activities, and is offered at ten locations. Some of the programs provided at each site include arts and crafts, dance, drama, cooking classes, Karate, fitness, holiday/special events, sports, homework assistance, cultural awareness, community outreach, and nutrition, taught and hosted by trained staff. He went over what is included in the Summer Fun Camp, and described the PARCS Senior Meals Program, for those 60 and older, which has been run by the PARCS Department since 1994. Currently the program is offered at Lafayette Neighborhood Park, Mary Ella Brown Community Center, Mosqueda Community Center, Pinedale Community Center, Senior Citizens’ Village, and the Ted C. Wills Community Center. The past fiscal year 38,042 meals were served. He concluded with explanation of one of the most important things accomplished each year, program monitoring.

Ms. Clark continued with the PowerPoint, stating that the City continues to progress toward
accomplishing Consolidated Plan goals, and even so, she acknowledged that there is always room for improvement. She identified three areas where the City is actively working to improve its programming: 1) The Community Development Block Grant Program, which was very successful in documenting eligible activities, areas, and beneficiaries for its programming. She went over the need to use internal MOUs to track progress. She said the City can improve its success by reporting quarterly to the HCDC and City Council, and to encourage quarterly reporting by sub-recipients so that budget adjustments can be made, if needed. 2) The HOME Program is also identified in the evaluation for improvement. 3) The third is the Emergency Shelter Grant Program. The City has struggled with its commitment expenditure deadlines, and she reminded the Commission that the Department has come to them in the past year probably five times regarding commitment of funds, allocation levels, contracts with agencies. She said they are now current with the commitment expenditure deadlines, and they will be coming back before the HCDC hopefully with contracts by the end of the year, to commit the funds and stay within the timeline.

Ms. Clark concluded that the report itself is probably three to four times longer than the CAPER typically is, but they wanted to make sure the issues were covered, some of the methods being taken to move the projects forward, the subject of leveraging, how many dollars are out there in the community. She voiced that the City needs to do a better job of talking about how as a community they’re investing in the neighborhoods, and how they’re using multiple sources of funding to assist.

Commissioner Hardie inquired about the Fresno Madera Continuum of Care. Ms. Clark replied that the FMCoC is made up of over 30 agencies that are homeless providers, and it does include WestCare, Turning Point, the County, the Housing Authority. It’s Fresno and Madera counties, it includes Wings, EOC, the Poverello House, Marjaree Mason Center, all of the big names, and some of the smaller ones as well. The organization meets monthly, and Mr. Trujillo, Housing Manager, is the City’s representative to that organization. She explained some of what the organization does and said they report all of their information into HMIS, an information management system for homeless data, and told about how it assists the City with how to spend monies. She added they also participate in the Coordinated Access and Housing Matching System, explained how that system works, and how they report all of their homeless accomplishments in HMIS, and that they participate in the CAHM System to receive ESG funds.

Vice Chair Fiske asked if there is a way to look at a list of, for example, the 18 multi-family housing projects that were monitored. Ms. Clark responded yes, and said those were completed in prior years, so they’d go back and monitor for the compliance period of that contract. It might be a 15-year, it might be a 40-year compliance period. They’re looked at annually. Discussion continued.

Commissioner Cox asked if the numbers have decreased since the homeless campaign was launched, in 2013. Ms. Clark replied that the point in time counts that the Continuum of Care conducted this year saw a 40 percent decrease in chronic homelessness since 2013, over the two-year period. That’s someone who has been on the street continuously, more than once. The goal is to end veteran homelessness by the end of 2015, to end chronic homelessness by the end of 2016, and to get to what’s called virtual zero by the end of 2017. These are national goals that the Interagency Council on Homelessness has set. People are not being forced, like in the 1970s and ‘80s before Ronald Reagan, people saying no, we can’t warehouse individuals with mental health issues or disabilities. There was a huge increase in homelessness after that occurred. People now
have choice, providing options with dignity for individuals who want to participate. She doesn’t know if there’s been a decision as to what “virtual zero” means, but that is the goal. Mr. Trujillo added that it was explained to him that there’s always going to be a percentage of people out there that are not going to come off the street. Vice Chair Fiske asked what the City would do with the people who will not want to go into the program. Ms. Clark said that’s a hard question and she doesn’t have an answer. Mr. Trujillo stated that they do have a choice.

Chair Farrar and Commissioner Cox complimented the report. Ms. Clark responded that there is still a lot to do, but it’s a good first step. She said the Department appreciates the Commission’s help in getting them there and continuing to be vigilant, and to look at the reports quarterly. Discussion continued.

G. INFORMATIONAL ITEMS

None.

H. COMMISSIONER ITEMS

None.

I. UNSCHEDULED ORAL COMMUNICATIONS

Ms. Patience Milrod voiced a concern about the format of the CAPER report, stating that she found it difficult to find out what the goals were and compare them to actual numbers in terms of performance. She stated it might be helpful to attach a spreadsheet so that the goals and the performance numbers are correlated. She also said it’s very difficult to tell what the income levels are of the beneficiaries, and she gave Fultonia as an example, that Mr. Trujillo said there were 45 affordable units, and there are 11 affordable units, and it’s a HUD investment of around $1.2 million. She would like to know what the income levels are of the individuals who would occupy those affordable units, and whom they are targeted for. She mentioned there is such a horrible deficit in low, extremely low, and even moderate-income housing in the City, so it would be important to know if they are catching up at all or are they still serving basically moderate-income individuals. She expessed that the report shows a great deal of work and attention to detail on the part of staff, but as a reader those two items need a little more clarity.

Ms. Ashley Werner, with Leadership Counsel for Justice and Accountability, stated that with respect to public outreach, they do appreciate that the City is taking extra steps to try and inform the public, but by looking around the room, the presence of people, they know there is a ways to go. She suggested that they need to keep brainstorming about how to actually get people into the room to absorb this information, because most residents are not checking the City’s website or the City Clerk’s office. One suggestion would be to use the email addresses obtained through the Consolidated Plan Workshop, and send out an email when these things come up. It’s been a priority for residents in south Fresno that it’s not acceptable, it’s not acceptable under the law, and it’s not acceptable from the community’s perspective to keep locating subsidized housing only in south Fresno. She encouraged the Commission to ask tough questions about why that is, what power the City has, and what action it can be taking to make that housing more accessible in other areas throughout the city. She believes part of that is zoning, and maybe not allowing San Francisco style multi-family units, but Fresno style multi-family, or condos, or
whatever it is that’s a little more accessible than single-family subdivisions that are predominantly being constructed in north Fresno.

Ms. Werner spoke of the City’s actions to attract economic development industries to the City by reducing and waiving impact fees. She said they’ve talked with City Council and requested that there’s something in place to ensure that residents from low-income neighborhoods and CDBG-eligible neighborhoods are actually beneficiaries of those jobs, or at least data to be collected to see if they are. To her knowledge that’s not taking place at all, and it would not be a difficult thing to do, especially if these facilities are receiving the benefits of hundreds of thousands of dollars in impact fee waivers. In trying to move forward as a city, if the City is going to be giving away these dollars, residents in these neighborhoods should be benefitting.

Ms. Luisa Medina acknowledged Ms. Milrod’s statements regarding making the report a little bit easier to understand by having the information in one particular place and not having to go back and forth. She gave an example that the report gives ideas as to how much the investment of HOME funds were, but not how much was actually expended throughout. She reminded that Mr. Trujillo went through a litany of the dollars that were leveraged, and in many instances that’s not included, and said that’s a very positive comment for the City to make, because obviously the dollars that the City gets are not sufficient to address the housing needs as they’ve been identified in the ConPlan or the Annual Plan, but to show the amount of dollars that are actually invested in the programs is important to know. She alluded to Vice Chair Fiske’s question regarding the 18 multi-family units, and Ms. Medina made the assumption that they were recently completed, but the answer seemed to have appeared that it was perhaps a little bit older than that. She said some points need to be clarified for the public to get a better handle on what the monitoring entails. At the June 4th meeting there was introduced what was called a federal funding dashboard. Her assumption is that’s what the Department is bringing to the Commission and to City Council in October, because that is a very valuable tool.

Chair Farrar asked Ms. Clark how careful the Commission must be in defining the different groups of people, privacy issues. Ms. Clark stated this is a draft and can be added to so that people get a better understanding. Income limits can be added, it’s easy and doesn’t identify specific people in terms of what their income is, it just states what the income limits for those groups are. Discussion continued.

J. ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business to bring before the Housing and Community Development Commission, the meeting adjourned at 6:06 p.m.

The next scheduled Commission meeting is **September 23, 2015**.

{SIGNATURES ON FILE}

________________________________________________________________________
Bob Farrar, HCDC Chairperson

________________________________________________________________________
José Trujillo, Manager Housing and Community Development Division