

CDBG-CV Zoom Meeting

October 29, 2020

Michael MacMann – Facilitator

Attendees

Phil Steinhaus

Mary Ratliff

Annabelle Simmons

Chris Horn

Rebekah Robertson

Impact on Household

- Rebekah – Been beneficial to meet others through zoom. Works for Edward Jones, two people in the office. Chair of Booneslick Kiwanis. Grandchildren having a hard time. Mom has to work.
- Annabelle – Didn't expect pandemic to go on so long. Exercising at home instead of at the ARC. Son and children have to stay home with Mom and Dad. Mom and Dad have 5 kids. Parents had to go back to work. Couldn't visit Grandma. (Annabelle)
- Mary – Easier for her since she is retired. Her adult children and their children have been more affected. Involved with NAACP and 2nd Baptist Church. Virtual meetings are more difficult due to lack of in-person interactions. Heard from those who have been laid off from work. Has been trying to help others.
- Chris – Able to adapt fairly well. Wife works for CPS. Chris serves on the school board and spends a lot of time working on COVID issues affecting our schools.
- Phil – Phil and wife and being very cautious. CHA has taken a lot of precautions and adjusted work practices. Moving Ahead program has adjusted to learning pods for 50 children.

How should money be spent?/What types of needs should be addressed?

- Annabelle – There are needs for utility assistance. Loss of employment has let to people to be fall behind in rent. There are concerns about what happens after the eviction moratorium ends.
- Mary – Food prices rising and families not able to meet their nutritional needs is a concern.
- Mike – There was a serious issue with food insecurity before the pandemic.
- Rebekah – There are concerns about private renters who can't pay their rent leading to landlords not being able to pay their mortgages. Concerned about others who are getting evicted with winter coming.
 - Everyone should get free COVID testing.
 - Childcare is a issue, even for families with children who are "in-seat" in school when class is not in session on Wednesdays. Associated costs with staying with other family members...internet access, extra food, etc.
 - Flourish program has been successful.
- Chris – Sees the need to make sure that all families have good internet connectivity.
 - Also concerned about health care issues.
- Mary – Many people who rent are falling behind and once the moratorium is over, she is concerned that evictions will start and people will be unable to get caught up on their rent.
 - Many had low-paying jobs to begin with.
 - Work hours were cut back.
 - Everyone is hurting.
 - Look for ways to subsidize those behind in rent to help them get caught up and avoid eviction.

- Falling behind in utility payments with winter coming on is a real concern.
- Also concerned about low-income students having the technology and the internet connectivity in order to participate in on-line learning.
- Chris – Hot spots are helping families get connected. Concerned about those areas where there is no internet connectivity.
- Phil – Food seems to be our big issue right now. Utilities are going to be a real concern for families without any other forms of housing assistance. 81 families in public housing are behind in their utilities and the CHA has been helping them get connected with utility assistance through CMCA.

Where do you see Columbia in the future?

- Phil – Concerned for the future. Will take at least a year to get back to normal. It will take time for the local economy to recover. We are a resilient community.
- Rebekah – Aware of Black Lives Matter and concerned about racial divisions and hopes that this new awareness will help to heal racial divides.
 - Economic impact on small and big businesses.
 - Small businesses have been quickly impacted.
 - Big businesses will have longer term impacts. Can't run away from it.
 - Childcare is a real concern. Really difficult for childcare centers to stay open, particularly those who serve low-income children.
 - Virtual connections will be beneficial in learning, health care, and other applications.
- Annabelle – Very concerned about the homeless in our community.
 - Need mental health services for the homeless.
 - Need shelter for the homeless.
 - She sees the homeless as real persons who need help and worthy of help.
 - Can help them become productive and an asset to our community.
 - Use the COVID pandemic as a preparation for the next pandemic.
- Mary – Envisions the ability to come together as one city, to care for the homeless, a job for everyone, eliminate economic disparities.
 - Need a place for all homeless people.
 - Mental health services are also needed for the homeless.
 - Look at people who are unemployed and help them attain skills and employment.
 - Address substance abuse issues that are impacting the ability of people to function and be productive.
 - Would like to see Columbia as a model city for others to look up to.
 - Need for livable wages for families and individuals so they can meet their basic needs and flourish.
- Chris – Would like to see Columbia to be the best that it can be. Isn't really interested in seeing the community returning to normal, but needs to aspire to be better than our previous "normal."
 - A focus on quality education for everyone will be important.
 - Everyone has been affected and we need to work to address disparities that exist in our community and eliminate them in the future.
 - We will learn a lot from this pandemic.
 - We need to deal with the issues that make us uncomfortable.
 - Continue to develop programs that address the outcomes that we desire.