

MINUTES

Citizen's District Council Meeting
City of Muskegon CDBG
Conference Room 203
Muskegon, Michigan
Tuesday, November 2, 2009

CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order by Patricia Montney at 5:39 p.m.

ROLL CALL

Roll call was taken by Liz Parker.

Present: Patricia Montney, Thomas Pastoor, Dan Rinsema-Sybenga, Addie Sanders-Randall, Amy Varnado, Stephen Gawron

Excused: Ned Carter, Muhammad Hakeem, Virgie Jackson,

Staff Present: Wilmern Griffin, Liz Parker, Beth Lewis – Ass't Director of Finance

Guest: Steven Magana, MCC student - government class requirement

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Dan Rinsema-Sybenga made a motion to approve the minutes from the last meeting (October 6, 2009). Tom Pastoor seconded. Motion passed unanimously.

OLD BUSINESS

- **Housing Specialist Position**

Per Wil Griffin, there were six applicants for the position, one in-house union person was eligible but failed the test and one non-union person on layoff was also eligible and passed the test. This person should start in a week or two unless there is a problem with the union with this person going from a non-union to union position. In the meantime, CNS is trying to keep emergency repairs going. Some calls have been eliminated because they are not an emergency need. Furnaces not working, electrical, plumbing or serious structural issues are being addressed. CNS also has to go within the budget. Tom Pastoor asked what the time frame for applying is. Wil said just contact CNS and they will take the information. Wil has been going out with the inspectors and going by their recommendations. Some of the smaller items they've done in the past, such as water heaters, they are trying to stay away from as these are

not terribly expensive items. However, if we came across a situation of a senior with no income, we would assist them as best we could.

NEW BUSINESS

- **Lead Program Status**

Wil Griffin had a handout of the HUD amount of the grant and the HUD review of the quarterly reports submitted. In all reviews scores were between 92% and 100%, putting CNS in the Green designation, meaning they are meeting or exceeding the primary benchmarks. Wil mentioned the negative Mlive online forum comments that were made from people thinking how incompetent City Hall is. They did not have all the information. The grant was started in November 2007 of which the first two years were for Lead Abatement and the third year was for clean up and research. CNS finished the grant as of October, 2009. He said his staff did an excellent job. If they get calls now from applicants and there are high blood levels in their children, they are referred to the State. Wil said things were done in a timely fashion. He feels part of the backlash is because a lot of people were depending on this funding, including workers (which approximately 50 were trained) and suppliers. Material suppliers alternated between projects. There is no more funding other than the \$2 million that was put into the community. He does plan on applying for another Lead Grant if the opportunity comes up. CNS made all their objectives except for the total number of units they thought they could do as they underestimated the need in the community as there is so much Lead in Muskegon. There was collaboration with the Muskegon County Health Department and Community Health and the contractors. While Wil said they might have done some things differently in hindsight, the scores show they did an excellent job. Addie Sanders-Randall did comment there are a lot of old houses in Muskegon. Wil commented that's why his department went through so much money because of all the Lead in the community. Amy Varnado said her son was tested for Lead so her child benefitted from the program.

- **NSP1**

Wil advised MSHDA is administering the program and they are learning as they go. Now they want additional paperwork that is slowing things down including the demolitions Wil wanted done before the end of the year. According to MSHDA, Muskegon is far ahead of other cities, already has projects on their system and is drawing funds. The current project is 940 Wood Street.

- **NSP2**

Wil Griffin said it was his understanding that between Thanksgiving and December the awards should be announced, but they have up until February 26, 2010. This is the \$5 million grant. Tom Pastoor asked if this was the grant with the project for Jackson Hill. Wil said one project that was submitted with the application is to tear down Froebel School and make that area a development. Pat Montney asked about asbestos. Wil advised there probably is asbestos. If CNS is awarded the grant, he wants to bring in someone who is good at evaluating older schools and buildings and determine what is salvageable and then he'd like to sell off those salvageable items. He was also thinking of selling the bricks that come from the school, at a nominal fee, as a lot of the residents attended that school. Amy Varnado said Hackley School of Nursing did some salvaging

when they tore down the old nursing housing on Hackley. Wil also said Deconstruction Programs are being suggested by HUD. Dan Rinsema-Sybenga said Architectural Hardware on Getty will buy and sell salvageable items. This income would be considered additional revenue for NSP2. Amy Varnado mentioned West Michigan Christian High needed a certified expert who knew schools to go through and determine what could be salvaged before the school changed to Three Oaks.

- **Weatherization Program**

Wil Griffin said this is first proposed project for senior citizens. The house would be tested through an Energy Audit and replace what was required to make the home energy efficient. This was put out to bid so the program is on hold as they didn't get responses. If someone would give a good bid to benefit all, they could start testing this year and next year he could have the work done. The one bid received was 60% to 70% of the total funding. Wil said this was way above what his program can afford. In order to do an Energy Audit, the person has a 'gun' that measures where heat or air is leaking, they do a pressure test on air seepage, check the furnace, etc. There is no one qualified locally. Consumers Energy used to do energy audits. Tom Pastoor asked how much money would be needed. Wil advised about 10 – 15 properties being tested would cost about \$3,000 - \$5,000. Additional money would go to the actual weatherization for furnaces, insulation, doors, etc. Wil confirmed the money is from HOME funds. Wil explained some HOME funds would be used for testing and he would use money from other areas, but at this time he's not sure. Pat Montney asked if CAP also does this. Wil said yes, but when he contacted CAP, they said his program was more in depth than what theirs is. CAP got a significant amount of stimulus money for their weatherization program but he doesn't know where CAP is on that. Someone asked about the Stimulus Package. Wil said the money CNS got, approximately \$260,000, is going to be used to pave White Street. Tom Pastoor said he knew someone who went through the original program in 2008 and was very happy.

- **Consolidated Plan 2010 - 2015**

Wil Griffin stated HUD in Detroit is requesting he submit a letter to postpone the submission of the five-year Consolidated Plan 2010 – 2015 until the 2010 Census data is available. As an example, in 2000 the unemployment rate was about 5%. Things have significantly changed since then and the Consolidated Plan needs to reflect these changes. Dan Rinsema-Sybenga wanted to know when the data would be available. Wil said it might be as late as 2011. Wil said he will try and get as much information as he can without the Census data, such as housing and mortgage data, have meetings and discuss some things. He will try and get some health and educational information. Demographic information specific to Census data will be collected when the Census data is available. Tom Pastoor talked about the Consolidated Plan and getting more involved especially with the neighborhood associations. Pat asked if the Fair Housing should have waited for the Census data before doing the impediment study. Wil said it might have been a good idea, but those studies are required every two years. Pat Montney said there should be an update of the targeted areas. Per Wil, as of the 2000 Census data, the entire City was low/mod except for part of East Muskegon and the far West. Target areas means at least 51% of the population is low/mod. The CNS programs qualify residents by their overall income, regardless of their area. Street work can't be done with CDBG funds in a non-low/mod area, but other funds could be used for street projects. Pat asked if this should be checked out for to verify target areas.

She felt there should be more money. Wil thinks there will not be a significant increase in funding unless there is a significant increase in the number of low/mod areas.

OTHER BUSINESS

Wil Griffin advised there will be an ad this month in the Muskegon Chronicle for the 2010 – 2011 CDBG/HOME programs. It will be difficult as there is so much need in the area and funding is so tight. As of August, the unemployment rate was 21.2% before Sappi made their final decision to close. Pat Montney asked about Revenue Sharing. Beth Lewis explained the City got an 11% hit equaling \$300,000, which is a big hit for the City. The October payment was almost \$200,000 less than last year's or 20 – 21% lower. Beth said Income Tax was reforecast. Last year's numbers were up until October 2008; then they were much lower. It is projected Income Tax will be down \$1 million. Wil said Michigan went from the top 16 to the bottom 36 in the last 10 years for overall wealth. Steve Gawron said the biggest resource is an educated and highly trained population and to keep kids in school for their secondary education and then for them to get at least a two-year degree. This is what sells an industry to come to a town. Steve said education will be what brings in new business. He said kudos to Wil for the Academic Olympics. Keeping the kids in school is what is needed. Wil added that if we don't have our kids educated, we will compete with third world nations who pay low wages. Our economy is now competing with people all over the world.

ADJOURNMENT

If there is a December meeting, it would probably be December 5. The January meeting will probably be on the first Tuesday.

Patricia Montney adjourned the meeting at 6:21 p.m.

Respectively submitted,

Liz Parker
Community and Neighborhood Services
City of Muskegon