

# MINUTES

Citizen's District Council Meeting  
City of Muskegon CDBG  
Conference Room 203  
Muskegon, Michigan  
Tuesday, April 14, 2010

## CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order by Pat Montney at 5:36 p.m.

## ROLL CALL

Roll call was taken by Liz Parker.

Present: Patricia Montney, Rasheedah Gillespie-Muhammad, Thomas Pastoor, Tiffany Seals, Amy Varnado, Stephen Gawron

Excused: Ned Carter, Virgie Jackson, Addie Sanders-Randall

Staff Present: Wilmern Griffin, Liz Parker

## APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Tom Pastoor made a motion to approve the minutes from the last meeting (February 24, 2010). Pat Montney seconded. Motion passed unanimously.

## OLD BUSINESS

### • Discussion of Final Determinations

Wil Griffin advised the group the City Commission voted for CDBG with the CDC grant recommendations; for HOME they went with the City Administration recommendations. That means each non-profit will receive \$3,500 for each of their CDBG proposals and the City departments will receive the funding the CDC recommended. For HOME funding, Community enCompass will receive \$32,500, Habitat will receive \$45,000, NIC will receive \$30,000, Rental Rehab will receive \$60,000 and the Sr. Weatherization Program will receive \$120,000. Pat Montney asked why Habitat didn't get fully funded. Wil said there was no discussion. Tom Pastoor said the Commission's decisions were a good use of the CDC's time and he appreciated the Commission's vote and believes seeing how conservative the CDC was, plus the memo explaining their recommendations, helped. Pat said that the City Commission had used the CDC recommendations before. Steve Gawron said the Commission saw how conservative the CDC was in their recommendations and along with the memo stating why they were making the recommendations, showed that the CDC really considered their charge and

position. Steve said the shocker for the non-profits was the City Administration's recommendation for them of \$0 funding, which the Commission has been preparing them about this for a number of years. Steve said it could be more critical in the future, depending on how the Federal funding goes along with the economy. Pat Montney asked about the policy of funding the non-profits for \$25,000. Steve Gawron said they can depart, within reason, from the policy or it can be rescinded. People have to remember the non-profits have other avenues they can go to for funding whereas the City is limited to where they can get funding from. Steve said for the Red Cross they have stated they don't get funding from Red Cross national; perhaps it's time they got some national funding. Currently there are two diabetes programs that got grants; perhaps they can get grants from the largest medical center (Trinity) or the dialysis centers. There was a millage through the county for the vets; perhaps they can collaborate with other food banks. There was a comment at the City Commission meeting of why the City Administration didn't go with the CDC recommendations. Steve reminded everyone that the City Administration and the CDC are separate entities. Steve said the recommendations from the CDC made sense for the non-profits as the services they provide are essential; however, \$3,500 should send a message to the non-profits. He also said the City Manager, Bryon Mazade, said the CDC did a good job.

Pat Montney asked why the Vinyl Siding Program can't be under a portion of HOME funding. Wil Griffin said no, it is possible. He said you have to show how at least \$1,000 per house was being used for HOME funds. Tom Pastoor mentioned that some of the CHDO's were not able to spend all their funds in the last several years. Pat wanted to know if there was a way to have the Vinyl Siding Program in both CDBG and HOME as that program needs all the help it can get. Wil said he would have to do some research and rewrite the guidelines. Amy Varnado asked if there were other programs, such as Emergency Repair, that could also go in both CDBG and HOME. Wil said they would have to show where at least \$1,000 per household was going into the repairs for HOME funding. Steve Gawron mentioned sometimes it's just an issue of a \$400 water heater. Pat said that when a new water heater gets installed, it can become a pricey item if a new chimney liner also has to be installed.

Pat Montney asked if Muskegon Main Street has to show employees hired since their grant is under \$10,000. Wil Griffin advised they don't have to show that but they will still have to show activity when they complete their quarterly reports. They have to show a measure of need.

## **NEW BUSINESS**

- **2010 – 2015 Consolidated Plan**

Wil Griffin advised the group the last five-year plan started in 2005. He now has to develop the 2010 – 2015 plan. He will start collecting data (housing, education, employment, crime, etc.) other than Census data, which won't be available until sometime next year. He will be getting surveys for neighborhood associations and meetings with non-profits. The Plan goes for community needs. Hopefully realtors will participate this time. It would help understand the value of the neighborhoods. Tom Pastoor said he'd like to see more neighborhood revitalization from a human point of view. Amy Varnado asked when the deadline was. Wil advised it would be next year.

He got a waiver from HUD to wait for the Census data. He thinks low income has increased and the recession might show an increase in Muskegon. Pat Montney asked if the goals would change. Wil said it would depend on the survey results. Wil is proud of the goals met from the current Action Plan. The Lead Grant helped with rental rehabs. After the Lead Grant, rental rehabs kicked in. Pat said a lot of landlords didn't want to deal with the City. When you are a landlord you are a business person. The Rental Rehab program allows for a 50/50 match for funds up to \$15,000. That's a good deal and many times it does not have to be paid back. The apartment is then up to par and more attractive to potential tenants. Tom Pastoor said the program also saves another house in the City and improves the house and the neighborhood.

Pat Montney asked if Wil was going to get another Lead Abatement grant. He said he is considering it, but the county is also considering applying. They basically want to take the grant CNS wrote and modify it for their use. Wil asked what percentage could be covered by the City and he was told only approximately 30 – 40%. He and Cathy Brubaker-Clarke will be meeting with the county and hopefully will have a partnership. Wil said the quarterly reports his department submitted for their Lead Grant got 97 – 98% grades, which tells him he needs to apply for another grant. They also were able to spend the money within the time period allotted; they should be eligible for the next grant. Steve Gawron said the CNS department should be applauded for their scrutiny from the CDC, their report writing details, questions asked and answered. Everyone knows where the money is going; the trails and the specifics are fantastic. He said it was mind boggling how well the department is run compared to other cities that are misusing money, etc.

The question was brought up about the YouthBuild. Wil Griffin said he is trying to have more activities for youth. In the Action Plant there is a dire need for the YouthBuild. There is a grant out of the Department of Justice for gang intervention, but one of the requirements is to do an assessment of gangs in the community and we don't have that. Hopefully we can get that information now to be prepared for next year. Our gang experience isn't like Holland or Grand Rapids, but we still have gang-type activities. Any gang intervention can't hurt. Tom Pastoor asked about police and law enforcement, etc. Wil said he felt there should be a steering committee consisting of law enforcement, the public services and the prosecutor's office and the neighborhood associations to gather data, crime stats and surveys. It wouldn't be an easy task but just having that information would be useful to entities in the City. Wil said he realized Holland and Grand Rapids have problems with gangs, but they don't have problems recruiting employers. Steve Gawron said Grand Rapids and Holland have old manufacturing families in business making money. Muskegon doesn't have that; we only have trust money families. Tom Pastoor said the perception is that Muskegon has gangs and we should be fighting that perception. We have more neighborliness than other areas and that message has to get out to the other areas. We have many values. Steve Gawron said our sister city of Muskegon Heights is a failed state and a disjointed government. Rasheedah Gillespie-Muhammad said Western Michigan Alliance says issues of race are a big issue for not bringing in businesses and we have not resolved the issue of how we all get along and employers don't want employees at each others throat. Steve said Muskegon is one of the oldest integrated cities in the USA. Muskegon is one of the largest Jim Crow towns. Things in backgrounds cause problems with people of other backgrounds. If we can sincerely change that we can start to see a change for the better in the City.

- **2010 – 2011 Action Plan**

Wil Griffin advised the Action Plan was revised to include the final grant determinations and health, youth and senior services. It will also be on the City's CNS webpage.

- **Review Grant Application Procedure**

Pat Montney stated the meetings for the grant reviews were quite lengthy and perhaps they should be just for questions only as the CDC already has the narrative from the applications. There should just be 15 minutes for questions and answers. Steve Gawron said to just ask the pertinent questions. It was suggested to have a meeting prior to the review meetings and email questions and concerns before. It was also suggested to have the solicitation in the Chronicle at the end of October. Pat Montney said at one time the grants reviews were in December. Tom Pastoor said he liked the idea of questions and answers only. It was suggested to have current blank applications sent to each CDC member for revisions as the forms need to be updated.

### **OTHER BUSINESS**

Wil Griffin announced the Open House from 2 - 5pm at 940 Wood, which is the first completed NSP project. Wil said at the Open House they will be handing out energy-efficient light bulbs and showcasing the local restaurant on Third Street, Taqueria Aguilar, by providing tacos for everyone. He also has commercials on radio stations 103.7 and 101.1, along with the community calendars on Channels 8 and 13 and Fox. If we can get more people from other communities to see the housing stock with the current prices, it would help.

The next meeting will be on June 1, at 5:30 p.m. in conference room 203.

### **ADJOURNMENT**

Pat Montney adjourned the meeting at 6:59 p.m.

Respectively submitted,  
Liz Parker  
Community and Neighborhood Services  
City of Muskegon