

MINUTES

Citizen's District Council Meeting
City of Muskegon CDBG
Conference Room 203
Muskegon, Michigan
Tuesday, July 20, 2010

CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order by Pat Montney at 5:35 p.m.

ROLL CALL

Roll call was taken by Liz Parker.

Present: Patricia Montney, Ned Carter, Virgie Jackson, Thomas Pastoor, Addie Sanders-Randall, Stephen Gawron

Absent: Tiffany Seals

Excused: Rasheedah Gillespie-Muhammad, Amy Varnado

Staff Present: Oneata Bailey, Cathy Brubaker-Clarke, Liz Parker

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Tom Pastoor made a motion to approve the minutes from the last meeting (June 1, 2010). Ned Carter seconded. Motion passed unanimously.

OLD BUSINESS

- **NSP Progress**

Oneata Bailey said they have seven homes to be rehabbed and one for new construction that is going to the City Commission next week. NSP is scheduled for completion in 2012. She continued that there are a lot of deadlines. They just completed one for additional MSHDA funds. MSHDA will be visiting to confirm the exact amount needed. Tom Pastoor asked about the rehab work and if local contractors were used. Oneata said they try to use as many local contractors as possible. Many of the bids were from local contractors, but there were also some from outside Muskegon such as Grand Rapids and Grand Haven. The question was asked about who selects the properties. Oneata advised Wil Griffin had selected the properties. They had to be abandoned, blighted or foreclosed. He tried to get properties in a variety of neighborhoods, including Lakeside and Nims. There are no houses in East Muskegon. Three properties were purchased from the Land Bank, but we need to do research from the title company. Final title is required before you can request funds. Sue from CNS handles the liens and will try getting titles on the Land Bank properties. Pat Montney wanted to know if Sue would be on the Land Bank Board. Oneata and Cathy Brubaker-Clarke said not. Steve Gawron stated he represents the City Commission on the Land Bank Committee. They also have an Advisory Panel and Wil

was on the Advisory Panel of the Land Bank. The State of Michigan provides a list of properties to the Planning department. Additional MSHDA funds will be used to complete properties. The original amount of \$1.4 million went to acquisition, administration fees, rehabilitation and demolitions. There are about 30 properties for this project, of which some will be demolished. MSHDA also wants to know what will happen to the properties. Some ideas will be gardens while others we hope to sell to the neighbors. Before demolitions can be done asbestos has to be abated. This can be costly. Oneata explained that on one property the cost for asbestos abatement was \$17,000, the demolition was \$5,000 and the property was bought for \$3,000. That's where some of the NSP funds have been going to. New home construction costs would be \$100,000. The initial \$1.4 million wouldn't be enough. The additional funds are necessary. This is not a good time to sell. Addie Sanders-Randall wanted to know how many properties CNS currently has on hand. Oneata said they have accepted a bid at 1581 Division. There is also a person interested on new construction at 539 Orchard; both properties are part of the HOME program and everything else is occupied. The first completed NSP home at 940 Wood is available; 4-bedrooms, 2.5 baths and energy efficient appliances. NSP allowed CNS to complete the project for about \$112,000 (including purchase of the property, lead abatement, the rehab and upgrade to be energy efficient) and then sell it for \$52,000. It's not about getting the money back; it's more about getting someone in the house that was once foreclosed or blighted. Pat wanted to know if there was going to be a slide show tour of the house. Oneata said there already is one on the City's website.

Tom asked how the McPherson's decided on the house on Myrtle. Oneata explained the CNS home was an easy fit for Mr. McPherson, who is about 6'7" – the ceilings at 214 Myrtle are high. There was also the stimulus package for first-time home owners. Diana Cain is the realtor who had been working with the McPherson's for the last two years. Wil Griffin had contracted with Diana to assist in selling this house. Mr. McPherson was comfortable in the house and it was also the last day for the stimulus package. Ned Carter said at the City Commission meeting that Mr. McPherson also wanted to buy the property next door for his daughter.

Cathy Brubaker-Clarke gave kudos to Oneata and staff for meeting the deadlines. Oneata said the CNS department has great teamwork.

Regarding the house for Habitat for Humanity, 25% of the NSP funds used must to go 50% AMI or less and Habitat only services those people. We are contracting for 510 White. White has just been paved using CDBG-R funds. We are also giving the land at 461 Marquette (after the demolition of the house which is an eye sore) to Habitat. Habitat has invited the City of Muskegon to be part of their First Families program. The Governor is doing something in Detroit with her family with a Habitat house and then they will come here to do something in Muskegon. This program helps all of us.

- **Third Annual Muskegon Unity Academic Olympics**

Liz Parker said the CNS department was not that far along in the planning stages of the Academic Olympics. With the current work load and without Wil, there is no way she could get it together in two months. It has been postpone until next year. Those who have expressed interest (volunteers and supporters) have already been contacted. Cathy Brubaker-Clarke said the department has to prioritize what has to be done. Those have to continue first.

NEW BUSINESS

- **Resignation of Director**

Cathy Brubaker-Clarke advised they received a formal resignation from Wil Griffin on the 7th or 8th of July. Oneata Bailey will be Acting Director. Cathy said they are going forward as we can over the next several weeks and months. It helped that Wil delegated a lot more in the last years. Oneata has a relationship with Ellen at HUD, as does Cathy. No permanent decision will be made right away by the City Manager. They will see how it goes and also how it goes with dealing with Norton Shores. Cathy will be working closely with the staff. She said they are lucky to have the CNS staff they have to do what they do. Addie Sanders-Randall asked if there was a reason stated for Wil's resignation. Cathy explained she couldn't go into details but it was a personnel issue. Pat Montney had a letter of appreciation to Wil that she wanted the Council to sign, if the Council agrees. Ned Carter made the motion to have the Council sign the letter. Tom Pastoor seconded. Motion passed unanimously. The letter was passed around for everyone to sign. Liz Parker will get the signatures of those not in attendance and mail the letter. Steve Gawron had to leave at 6:05. Tom Pastoor asked what the timetable is for CNS. Cathy Brubaker-Clarke said there is no timetable regarding the CNS department. She asked the City Manager to give her some time before making a decision. She doesn't know how long that time will be. Pat Montney asked what happens if they get in over their heads. Cathy wants to make sure the department isn't in over their heads. The department isn't in the shape it was when Wil first started. Things are on track. She did state Norton Shores is very satisfied with our staff. Things will be evaluated as they go. Addie Sanders-Randall said Oneata is a very qualified person. Cathy echoed that comment.

- **CAPER 2009 – 2010 Progress – Muskegon and Norton Shores**

Oneata Bailey said we would wait until July 27th to work on the CAPER as other deadlines had priority. She said they will first look at last year's report. She said Sue is currently running reports. The CAPER will be nothing fancy this year. Pat Montney asked about the IDIS reports. Oneata said that was under control because Sue knows what reports she would run for Wil. Oneata said programs were going on right now as standard as they've done before. The main concern is the CAPER. Pat asked about the other four reports that have to go in, such as accomplished data. Oneata said any reports that are due from IDIS, she and Sue are doing. Cathy said the staff does the work so the CDC doesn't have to worry about it. Oneata said the Action Plan for 2010 – 2011 was approved by HUD. We are at status quo for the year. Oneata also said they received a book from HUD that explains everything. She invited the members to look at the book. If someone wants to take it for the weekend that would be fine. Pat asked if it's online. Oneata said yes. Oneata said the book is the motivation for the department to do something different, whether we are pushing the envelope or expanding our imagination.

- **Five-year Consolidated Plan Progress**

Oneata Bailey said the Five-year Consolidated Plan is driven by what the City Commission wants to do and predicated upon the Census data. There will be a lot of work to do and neither she nor Liz has done a Consolidated Plan before; Cathy Brubaker-Clarke said she had. Cathy said they might request a contract with someone to do the rehabilitation monitoring on a minimal basis. That would free up some of Oneata's time. Cathy said it will take some creativity with the City Commission and the CDC of what has to be looked at over the next five years. Pat Montney clarified they also had to look at agencies and the

community for input, it isn't just what the City Commission wants. Tom Pastoor said he wants to be able to push the envelope for community development issues other than bricks and mortar. The neighborhood associations and the people need a sense of community. Some of the funds could be utilized to educate leaders in areas, training, technical assistance for the non-profits. The more education people have of the big picture, some core issues could be worked on, such as healing racial issues among many other things. Other cities that do things with funds that are really helpful. Tom would like to see that considered. Oneata said currently the City of Muskegon only receives CDBG and HOME funds. They do not receive HOPWA or ESG. There will be a town meeting in September to start. There will be two public hearing for the plan, one of which will be half-way through the process. There will be a lot of work in the fall for this report. Liz said there is an extension to next year to get Census data. Oneata said they will gather as much data as possible. Tom Pastoor mentioned the Commission had approved the Summer Intern program. Oneata said they had one, but that person was meant to help Wil with the Consolidated Plan. The department doesn't know enough yet to get her working on that, but she is helping them with other projects. Cathy Brubaker-Clarke said they might be able to get an intern in the fall to help with this project.

- **CDBG Funding of Graffiti Removal**

Cathy Brubaker-Clarke advised the group Wil Griffin had come to her about graffiti removal after a Blight-Flight Committee meeting. Graffiti removal has been cut back from the budget. Wil asked what if they used some CDBG funds. Cathy said they moved forward with this with a public notice and approval by the City Commission. Pat Montney wanted to know why this didn't go before the CDC. Cathy said she didn't know why it did not to go the CDC first. Tom Pastoor asked where the additional funding was coming from. Cathy said they were additional funds from HUD and HUD is OK with this.

OTHER BUSINESS

Liz Parker reminded everyone to send them their recommendations for revising the CDBG and HOME grant applications so they can be discussed at the September meeting. She also reminded everyone that if you can't make a meeting to please let her know as soon as possible by calling, email or leaving a voice message. They can also call the Chair, Pat Montney.

The next meeting will be September 7. A meeting will also be called when the CAPER is done.

ADJOURNMENT

Pat Montney adjourned the meeting at 6:35 p.m.

Respectively submitted,

Liz Parker
Community and Neighborhood Services
City of Muskegon