

MINUTES

Citizen's District Council Meeting
City of Muskegon CDBG
Conference Room 203
Muskegon, Michigan
Tuesday, March 1, 2011

CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order by Pat Montney at 5:30 p.m.

ROLL CALL

Roll call was taken by Liz Parker.

Present: Ned Carter, Rasheedah Gillespie-Muhammad, Virgie Jackson,
Stephanie Marion, Patricia Montney, Thomas Pastoor, Amy Varnado,
Stephen Gawron

Excused: Addie Sanders-Randall

Staff Present: Oneata Bailey, Bryon Mazade, Liz Parker

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Ned Carter made a motion to approve the minutes from the February 1, 2011 meeting. Rasheedah Gillespie-Muhammad seconded. Motion passed unanimously.

OLD BUSINESS

- **Five-year Consolidated Plan Discussion**

Oneata Bailey started the discussion with a handout of the plan's strategic outline of Economic Development, Housing and Neighborhoods. Tom Pastoor asked if it was OK to mail comments to Oneata regarding the plan and she said yes. She stated the strategic outline is what the plan is built around; incorporating some previous activities that are still a part of CNS.

Tom Pastoor stated neighborhoods are being covered by the NAM grants and youth programs are currently being worked on so these are the only grants. He wanted to know what happened to the community development items discussed at the last CDC meeting as they are not part of the strategic plan. Oneata stated the questions asked in the plan were answered that were required. Youth opportunities, employment and building their future are included. If the CDC wants the plan to say more they need to give her their comments. She also stated the 2010 Census data is not yet available and tables and charts are not part of the current draft copy, just the narrative draft. The April CDC meeting will be the time for discussion and editing.

Bryon Mazade did see the list discussed at the last CDC meeting and hopes a lot of the items will be addressed in the plan. He hopes that as the plan gets rolled out the group will see that the other departments tried to hit on these items. Tom asked where does the CDC sit in the decision making process and if they are even involved. Steve Gawron said their input is considered for the grants and Five-year Consolidated Plan. Oneata Bailey

said the survey results were utilized and she hopes the citizens will read the draft of the plan and express their comments. Steve said the plan relates to past successes. Like the National League of Cities, we need to toot our horn for the next five years as the grants could be eliminated with the new legislature. The City continues to operate with less and less and revenue sharing has been hit in Michigan. These are challenging times. Oneata said the previous goals set were surpassed and some of those same objectives will continue. The main focus now is youth: employment and education for ages 6 – 19.

NEW BUSINESS

• 2011 CDBG/HOME Grant Proposals and Recommendations

Oneata Bailey said the budget sheet and proposals were previously given to each CDC member. The grants determinations are part of the time-sensitive documents required by HUD. The Action Plan needs to be completed in the next few weeks, but it can't be done without the CDC recommendations. After that then the preliminary budget can be determined. This also has to be posted in the paper and comments taken at a City Commission meeting. The budget dictates what the Action Plan will be; then she can complete that tool. Ned Carter commented that the Administration recommendations were much less than what was requested and what was requested is much more than the funding available. Oneata admitted she is new to the budget. She gave the CDC Administration's input (Bryon Mazade, Cathy Brubaker-Clarke, Tim Paul and Oneata Bailey) hoping it would be helpful in their decision. She is asking the CDC to prioritize and rank the grant applications in case they don't get the money anticipated. Bryon Mazade stated what was handed out is the best case scenario. There is the possibility it could be 25% less. Oneata stated program income will not be budgeted this year.

Tom Pastoor asked when and at what meeting was the decision made not to accept applications from the CBO's. Bryon Mazade stated it was at the City Commission's goal setting meeting, which is a public meeting. Tom then wanted to know how Love INC got a grant application. Bryon stated the City specifically solicited Love INC as they felt it was an agency that could assist the City in a program they wanted to achieve; they want Love INC to administer the City program for utility assistance. Of the \$8,000 recommended, \$2,500 - \$3,000 would go to their handicap ramps program. Love INC currently does that now for the Community Foundation with funds from Julia Hackley. The City went to them and they will be administering the program on the City's behalf. Pat Montney asked where are the minutes from the goal setting meeting as there was no verbiage of what was discussed regarding the CBO's. She said if it's an open meeting the public should be able to review minutes and know what happens at the meeting. She also mentioned there was not mention of the meeting being an open meeting and it should have been advertised to the public for review.

Amy Varnado said in review that as of last month's meeting they felt very disrespected as a committee and not clear, not sure and where the CDC fits into the discussion process, especially with the CBO and Love INC decision. Bryon said the comment about the CDC not being taken seriously is not the case. The City Commission isn't being disrespectful. He said if you feel strongly Love INC should not get the money, make your recommendations. The Administration's recommendation is where they see the need. They look to the CDC to make recommendations of what are the important needs of the community. The CDC is not criticized for their recommendations, nor should they criticize staff for their recommendations. Ned Carter said they sometimes forget the CDC is in an advisory capacity and that they're not always going to get everything they want; but the

decision not to fund the CBO's was already made and that startled them. Bryon said that decision should not have startled anyone on the CDC as this has been an ongoing issue and struggle between the City, CBO's and CDC. Rasheedah Gillespie-Muhammad stated last year it appeared there wouldn't be any money for CBO's. Last year and this year both Administration recommendations have been \$0 to the CBO's. Tom Pastoor said his concern is that if all the CDBG funds are just to pay for City programs, then the CDC needs education of the different departments and how do all the programs work. Rasheedah Gillespie-Muhammad continued along those lines saying that maybe they need more department information, such as Affirmative Action where some companies are getting tax abatements; maybe some of those companies should be providing funding to the City. Bryon Mazade said he invites discussions. Pat Montney stated sometimes there are suggestions that the CDC makes that improve the department. Steve Gawron said it might help to get more information from the departments, getting questions to them ahead of time before having them come in to help streamline the process. The City programs are long-term programs. Prioritize and send your questions beforehand so we can get the best answers back. This process is done each year and the City Commission has the ultimate determination.

Pat Montney asked why this wasn't brought to them ahead of time as they are the advisory group; when the meeting was going to happen so they could be a part of it. Steve said this came up at the annual goal setting meeting. There is a set agenda, but other items evolve as the meeting progresses; the question came up about what was going to be done with CDBG this year. Ned Carter stated the Commission lives with this day to day while the CDC only handles this occasionally. Oneata Bailey stated the CDC met February 1 when she notified the group of the CBO decision and the goal setting meeting wasn't until January 21. Tom asked for clarification as to the goal setting meeting. Steve said it is goal setting for the Commission, hearing from their constituency, and look at available funds vs. who they have to deliver services, what can they live with and without and where can they find additional funds to do what needs to be done. In the past two years goals have filtered to public safety and infrastructure as that's all they have the money for. They are looking to maintain basic essential City services: police, maintain streets, provide clean water, demolish dangerous houses and buildings, board up others, and attempt at best to keep all inspections going. Tom says we never think outside of what is already done; take 10% of vinyl siding and put it towards community development, similar to what Holland is doing with a Neighborhood Leadership Academy. He is suggesting there are other people out there to enlist to get involved and he feels investing in the people is more important than vinyl siding. Steve said hopefully in the future they can look into Leadership activities, he respects Tom's opinion, but when looking at limited funds his priorities are different at this time. He'd rather see infrastructure vs. another committee. He's not sure a weekend leadership seminar could have as much impact with limited funds, as making sure infrastructure and someone's home is maintained. That's his take on it. Steve also said the CBO's have recourses the City doesn't have: church funding, nation organization funding, the third largest medical corporation in the US, etc. Tom understands but would just like to see a little bit of money from the City's budget and leverage it from other groups so you could probably do something, but if there is no investment other than what is done through the neighborhood associations, there is no community development. Steve said that next year Tom should come up with a viable plan. Bryon mentioned that the vinyl siding program is doing something different as it came from the painting program. Previously they were painting and repainting houses and the vinyl siding program is more economical, getting a bigger bang for the buck. It makes a difference to the neighborhood. Tom feels if work isn't done on neighborhood leadership, we could have the greatest

downtown, but without a sense of community it would be for naut. Bryon came back to what's the value of the CDC; it is to wrestle with these issues and decide where you think is the best use of this money and make the recommendations to the Commission. Steve said even if the money doesn't come out of it, the discussion has to continue. Rasheedah Gillespie-Muhammad said the Community Foundation has small grants that perhaps the neighborhood associations could benefit from. Tom would like to see a greater sense of connectiveness and community.

Pat Montney suggested another meeting to go over the grants. Oneata Bailey asked for questions to be emailed and who should come to the meeting. Ned Carter stated if the questions can be answered via email that would suffice instead of a person answering at the next meeting. Pat Montney stated percentages of low/mod are required. Ned suggested next year's application should state how much they are asking for, why the amount requested more or less than last year and what is the plan for the money for the current grant. All agreed. Pat Montney asked about the percentages of low/mod. Oneata Bailey explained the spreadsheet shows public service amounts cannot be more than 15% of the total CDBG allocation. The public service applications are listed with an "*" and they do not add up to more than 15%. The other mandate is that administration cannot be more than 20% of the total allocation. At least 70% has to go to low/mod, which the grants are within that guideline. Ned asked what program income is. Oneata explained with the example of a person who gets vinyl siding and then sells their house. The portion of the amount they would owe is returned as program income. This year program income is not being included because there is a debt recovery from prior years of \$250,000 the auditors say this cannot be carried over so it has to be paid back through program income. HUD reports show us not in debt, so there are discussions with HUD. Current programs do not carry a debt. Oneata also clarified that CDBG Administration and Service Delivery funds are for the CNS department for salaries, benefits and expenses to run the vinyl siding and emergency repair programs. For HOME funds, 10% goes to HOME Administration. There is no money coming from the General Fund going to CNS. Pat asked about how the groups for the Youth Services would be able to do the paperwork to determine how many people were assisted, etc. Oneata said if they want the money they will have to provide the numbers. It would be the same information as what the CBO's provide. Steve said he and the Commission wanted to make sure the Youth Services grantees were a viable service and able to administer their programs.

OTHER BUSINESS

- **Next CDC Meeting**

The next meeting will be Thursday, March 10 at 5:30 in Conference Room 203 to discuss the grant applications. The April meeting will be on Thursday, April 14, 2011, at 5:30 p.m. in Conference Room 203.

ADJOURNMENT

Pat Montney adjourned the meeting at 7:02 p.m.

Respectively submitted,

Liz Parker
Community and Neighborhood Services
City of Muskegon