

City of Worcester, Massachusetts

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COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT ADVISORY COMMITTEE

05/10/2017

City Hall, Levi Lincoln Chamber
455 Main Street
Worcester, MA
6:00pm

MEETING MINUTES

CDAC present: Edward Moynihan (Chair), Paula Stuart (Vice-Chair) Doug Arbetter, Martha Asseta, Michael Murphy, Dana Strong, Daniel Whalen.

CDAC absent: Nicola D'Andrea, Matthew Yalouris

City Staff: Greg Baker, Steve Hill

1) Call to Order

The meeting was called to order by Chairman Ed Moynihan at 6:10pm. A file containing the following items were distributed to each CDAC member:

- 1) Agenda
- 2) Minutes from 2/8/17
- 3) CDAC letter signed by Ed Moynihan
- 4) Action Plan summary sheet (Yr. 43 funding recommendations only)
- 5) CDAC Operating principles
- 6) RFP scoring sheet
- 7) RFP scoring sheet guide
- 8) Guide to RFP (1 page)

2) Welcome newly appointed member

CDAC members welcomed newly appointed member Michael Murphy to his first meeting.

3) Review and Approval of 2/8/17 Meeting Minutes

A motion was seconded and passed to vote approval of the 2/8/2017 minutes. The CDAC voted 7-0 for their approval.

4) Update of Year 43 CDBG Action Plan development status

CDAC members reviewed a copy of Year 43 CDBG funding recommendations as prepared by the Executive Office of Economic Development (EOED) and transmitted by the City Manager to the City Council for their review. During his overview of the recommendations, Greg Baker noted that funding amounts were estimated given a delay in the release of HUD allocations as a result of recent federal budget deliberations being delayed in light of the transition in administration. In lieu of an official figure, the overall City CDBG amount for this year was estimated at three percent below last year. Most of the recommended programs were funded at 88% of their requested amount. The recommendations would be reviewed by the City Council's Committee on Public Health and Human Services scheduled to meet on Monday, May 15th. Vice-Chair Paula Stuart indicated that she would be able to attend this meeting on behalf of the CDAC given that Chairman Ed Moynihan would not be able to attend.

In response to questions from CDAC, city staff reported that while HUD was granting a waiver of the traditional Action Plan deadline (normally 45 days prior to July 1), to within 60 days, max, after its release of funding allocations, CDBG funded Public Services sub-recipients would still be allowed to begin incurring costs as of July 1st.

Several CDAC members noted that there were some differences in the City's proposed CDBG funding priorities as compared to the priorities that CDAC had derived from their review process. The differences were attributed to the City's own proposal and evaluation process which built upon that used by CDAC. The CDAC had used a 50 point scoring system which evaluated proposals based on proposal narrative quality and content, community need addressed, program outcomes and measurements, project readiness, and organizational and staff capacity and experience. For Public Services, the city's EOED conducted a further evaluation and assessment of proposals using an 11 point system to ensure that proposed programs either have prior quality experience with CDBG program management, or would readily lend themselves to producing HUD performance-based reporting requirements, and, proposed programs met HUD "cost reasonableness" standards.

Some members expressed frustration that some new programs ranked highly by the CDAC, were not recommended by the City whose process instead continued to support long-time funded programs which in some cases were not as highly scored by the CDAC. The need to address differences and more closely align the CDAC and City processes, coupled with the desire to not dampen enthusiasm for the submission of new and innovative proposals provided a segue into the below discussion of potential changes / updates to CDAC's role and processes.

5) Discussion of potential changes / updates to CDAC role & processes

a. Role, organization and participation of committee members

The following major themes emerged as a result of a lengthy discussion among CDAC members and with City staff with regard to potential changes / updates of the CDAC role & processes, including its organization and the participation of committee members:

- The RFP scoring matrix should be made more “flexible” by including points not specifically tied to any category but which would increase CDAC’s capacity to subjectively analyze applications
- Create a set-aside of funds reserved for new organizations
- Revisit the RFP Scoring System so as not to unduly penalize programs that lack prior experience
- Revisit the existing RFP documents and scoring system

City staff was open to sharing other documents with CDAC members such as related to its internal compliance processes and the results of annual sub-recipient monitoring. City staff had prior not provided such items to the CDAC in order to maintain impartiality and not prejudice the opinions of CDAC members towards sub-recipients during their application review and scoring process.

There were also discussions on how to modify the annual meeting schedule of the CDAC which presently includes a highly concentrated schedule of meetings and activity from about October through February each year and then is mostly dormant for the remainder of the year. The creation of three-person sub committees and a proposal to hold additional meetings during the period of March through September were thought to be ways in which the CDAC could more effectively address items outside of the yearly proposal evaluation and recommendation cycle, stay better informed on the progress of currently funded programs, and keep abreast of the latest developments that impact CDBG.

b. CDBG Request for Proposal (RFP) & grant award parameters

Greg Baker was in favor of revisiting and perhaps redesigning CDBG RFP documents which have been in use for the last several years. There was a desire to more closely align the elements of the RFP with the metrics used in subrecipient contracts. It was felt that this would lead to a more efficient comparison among competing applications in addition to clarifying and streamlining the sub-recipient contracting process.

6) Discussion of next steps

With the impending departure of several CDAC members after their terms were set to expire on June 30, 2017, it was felt that immediate action should be taken on some of the above items, rather than put off changes into the upcoming year.

The below three items were passed by the CDAC following discussions on each. During the discussion prior to voting on these items, Greg Baker commented that given that the proposed changes could be substantive in nature, any proposed change would be subject to administrative review and determination of program eligibility prior to their potential implementation as policy or new process protocol.

A motion was seconded and passed by CDAC members to vote approval of the creation of a set aside pool of 10% of Public Services funds to fund new competitive

applications, with any unappropriated balance of funds not used being returned to the general grant pool for other applicants to use. The CDAC voted 7-0 for this motion.

A motion was seconded and passed to vote approval of a proposal to add three (3) discretionary points to be used by CDAC members during their review of CDBG applications. The CDAC voted 7-0 for this motion.

A motion was seconded and passed to vote approval of a proposal to examine the feasibility of creating two CDAC subcommittees comprised of 3 members each (with perhaps an alternate 4th member) – one to focus on Public Service CDBG activities and the other to focus on Affordable Housing and Public Facilities, and to implement a calendar of three meetings of said subcommittees between March and September of each year. The CDAC voted 6-0 for this motion (one member had departed the meeting prior to this vote).

7) Adjournment

As there were no more items for discussion, the meeting was adjourned at 8:15pm.