

City of Worcester, Massachusetts

Edward M. Augustus, Jr.
City Manager



Michael E. Traynor, Esq.
Chief Development Officer
Executive Office of Economic Development

Gregory J. Baker
Director
Neighborhood Development Division

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT ADVISORY COMMITTEE

05/23/2019

Esther Howland Chambers
Worcester City Hall Room 301
455 Main Street
Worcester, MA
6:00pm

MEETING MINUTES

CDAC present: Paula Stuart (Chair), Doug Arbetter (Vice Chair), Suzanne Graham, Edward Moynihan, Michael Murphy, Arline Rosario, Pamela Stolz, Dana Strong

CDAC absent: none (Danaah McCallum was appointed to Elections Commission and no longer serves on CDAC)

City Staff: Greg Baker, Sandy Amoakohene

1) Call to Order

The meeting was called to order by Chairperson Paula Stuart at 6:10 pm. The following items had been distributed to each CDAC member at the start of the meeting:

- Agenda
- Minutes from 3/28/2019
- City Manager Transmittal dated May 7, 2019 to the Worcester City Council (cm2019ma03111336 / Attachment for Item 94A #) containing 1.) City of Worcester Fiscal Year 2020/Year 45 Funding Recommendations for CDBG, ESG, and HOPWA, 2.) City Council resolutions to file and accept CDBG, HOME, ESG, and HOPWA grants, and 3.) CDBG Year 45 Draft Action Plan Recommendations
- CDBG Year 45 Draft Action Plan Recommendations (single-sided page)
- Community Development Advisory Committee letter dated April 26, 2019 from Paula Stuart, Chairperson RE – Community Development Advisory Committee Recommendations for Year 45 – Fiscal Year 2020 Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Funding
- Five-Year Consolidated Plan Community Input Meetings flyer (single-sided page, color printed) and 2019 Community Input Meeting Locations map

Tonight's meeting was filmed and can be viewed at the following link:

<http://ec4.cc/e2898753>

2) Review and Approval of 3/28/2019 meeting minutes (vote needed)

A motion was seconded and passed to vote approval of the 3/28/2019 minutes. CDAC voted 8-0 for their approval.

3) Briefing on final Action Plan recommendations for CDBG Yr. 45 to City Council

Greg Baker gave an overview of the above-referenced May 7, 2019 City Manager Transmittal to the Worcester City Council containing Fiscal Year 2020/Year 45 Funding Recommendations for CDBG. In response to a question from Chairperson Paula Stuart he stated that the city's recommendations were closely aligned with CDAC's recommendations as reflected in the above noted CDAC letter. As was discussed at the City Council Public Health & Human Services Committee's meeting (May 16, 2019) to review the recommendations, the final recommended amounts were adjusted for two programs as a result of administrative miscalculations through use of incorrectly copied budget amounts for the Centro Las Americas Emergency Food Pantry and the Quinsigamond Village Community Center Basic Needs Services proposals. The balance of funds remaining after these two corrections was added to the Housing Development Division's Affordable Housing Development Program in order to keep the total public services allocations safely within the HUD 15% maximum cap for this category.

It was noted that within the Public Services category all but two of the 17 programs recommended for funding received 90.45% of their requested amounts. Two programs - United Way YouthConnect Summer and South Worcester Neighborhood Center received 65% of their requested amounts. In the case of the United Way YouthConnect Summer program, the recommendation reflected a desire by the administration to continue to support the program as currently structured in which CDBG pays for only the leasing costs of bus transportation and does not support the request for additional CDBG funds for staffing costs. For the South Worcester Neighborhood Center, the recommendation was reflective of factors combining the documented continued poor performance of this program, an unreasonably high cost of this year's request in which the cost per unit (CPU) for persons to be served was several times higher than currently funded for this program, and the low rankings of the RFP by both the CDAC and the administration.

Three new public services programs were recommended for CDBG funding this year - Dismas House (BAR None), Family Health Center (Healthcare for the Homeless), and Veterans, Inc (Food Access and Security for Veterans). Two programs that were newly funded last year where not recommended for renewal this year – Regional Environmental Council - UGROW Community Gardens and Worcester Community Action Council - Working Cities Worcester. Both programs experienced significant start-up delays and will not meet their projected outcomes for the program year. The administration will work with both programs to reevaluate and perhaps reformulate their programs and invite them to resubmit for funding next year.

Only two public facilities projects were recommended for funding this year – Veterans, Inc (Improved Transitional Housing for Veterans) and YWCA (Bathroom ADA Compliance Upgrades). Both RFPs received the two highest rankings by CDAC. A proposal by South Middlesex Opportunity Council (SMOC) to fund a new fire sprinkler and alarm system for a sober house would assist a residential group home with in-house services limited to residents and was therefore determined to be eligible for funding as an Affordable Housing Development project. Staff proposed to SMOC that they reach out to the City’s Housing Division in order to

The City Manager has requested that \$500,000 in CDBG be used to pay part of the purchase cost for a new fire ladder truck which will leverage additional city tax levy funds in order to cover the total cost of almost \$900,000 for the truck.

The City Manager has also pledged to provide \$3 million in CDBG funds over five years to be targeted to the revitalization of the Green Island Neighborhood in tandem with the construction of the new minor league baseball stadium and mixed-use development in the area. Similar to recent efforts in the Union Hill neighborhood, the city plans to use a multi-departmental approach to work with residents and stakeholders to develop a revitalization plan which will redevelop homes (exteriors and internal core systems), businesses, streets, sidewalks, trees, and other improvements and seek to preserve neighborhood affordability. Recommendations for this year include \$500,000 in CDBG for Green Island Improvement Activities. Another \$350,000 in CDBG funds allocated to the Neighborhood Development Fund will be used to support Green Island Improvements.

CDAC members were invited to a public input neighborhood meeting in the Green Island neighborhood hosted by the City of Worcester’s Executive Office of Economic Development Department and scheduled for Wednesday, June 26, 2019 at 5:30 pm at the PNI Club, 290 Millbury Street.

4) Briefing and update on the Five (5) Year Consolidated Plan (2020-2025) community outreach process.

Greg Baker’s review of the above-listed Five-(5) Year Consolidated Plan Community Input Meetings flyer and 2019 Community Input Meetings Locations map led to considerable discussion with CDAC members on the community outreach process proposed for the development of the new plan. Ten community meetings are planned between June and October 2019, most of which will be imbedded within low- and moderate-income neighborhoods. Meetings will be held in each City Council district. CDAC members were strongly encouraged by the Chairperson and other committee members to attend the proposed community meetings and to promote awareness and encourage participation by residents and community stakeholders.

The development of the new Five (5) Year Consolidated Plan will be derived from an updated analysis of baseline community needs and priorities based on input from the neighborhood meetings. The plan development process will allow the city to reassess and reformulate its strategies for funding particular activities, as well as respond to updated community needs by re-visiting the Request-For-Proposal (RFP)

and the RFP scoring system to better seek the types of activities that align with an updated community needs assessment.

The administration also seeks to move toward more intensive case management programs that work with individuals over longer periods of time and that enact methods and provide services that enable low- and moderate-income persons to overcome barriers that inhibit their long term growth and self-sufficiency.

5) Adjournment

Just prior to adjournment, members agreed that the next CDAC meeting would be scheduled for late September 2019 and will be used to update committee members on status and progress of the consolidated plan community development process.

As there were no more items for discussion, the meeting was adjourned at 7:09 pm.