

City of Worcester, Massachusetts

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COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT ADVISORY COMMITTEE

01/25/2017

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 Assefa, Dana Strong, Daniel Whalen

CDAC absent: Nicola D'Andrea, Matthew Yalouris

City Staff: Greg Baker, Steve Hill, Anthony Miloski

1) Call to Order

The meeting was called to order by Chairman Ed Moynihan at 6:15pm. The Chairman stated that he had been mistaken when he said at the last CDAC meeting (held 1/18/17) that all CDAC meetings would henceforth be "streamed live" and were thus available to be watched by viewers in real time. Actually, all CDAC meetings are recorded and then re-broadcast on the City's government cable channel at dates and times.

2) Review and Approval of 1/11/2017 and 1/18/17 CDAC Minutes

The CDAC agreed to amend the 1/11/2017 meeting minutes as follows:

- Page 2, 4th line of text – replace sentence "Doug Arbetter asked ... businesses." with "Doug Arbetter asked how each loan would to be targeted to ensure the employment of low and moderate income persons?"
- Page 2, 5th line of text – delete sentence "Paul described specific language included in the contracts."

A motion was seconded and passed to vote approval of the 1/11/2017 minutes as thus amended. The CDAC voted 6-0 for their approval.

The CDAC agreed to amend the 1/18/2017 meeting minutes as follows:

- Page 2, sentence that starts with “CDAC members noted...” – delete parenthesis symbol “(” between words CDBG and such. The full sentence should now be “CDAC members noted that many of the proposals were renewals of programs currently being funded through CDBG such as through African Community Education (ACE), Centro Las Americas, Family Health Center, and Friendly House, and as such garnered minimal discussion given that they had already been extensively reviewed and discussed during last year’s process.”
- Page 3 last sentence – replace “CDAC RFP Scores due to City Office of Economic Development by Friday, February 3, 2017” with “CDAC RFP Scores due to the CDAC Recorder by Friday, February 3, 2017.”
- Page 4 first sentence – replace upper case letter “S” in word “Scoring” with lower case “s” so that word reads “scoring”.

A motion was seconded and passed to vote approval of the 1/18/2017 minutes as thus amended. The CDAC voted 6-0 for their approval.

In a follow-up to CDAC questions from their last meeting (1/18/2017) with regard to proposal on behalf of The Community Builders (TCB) Future Leaders of Worcester (FLOW) City staff reported:

In answer to a question on whether the TCB “FLOW” program has been administered directly through TCB or through a subcontracted vendor, it was reported that the program has been directly administered by TCB, and not through a sub-contracted provider.

In answer to a question on whether TCB made use of studies in order to provide an analysis of the merits of using cash stipends as client incentives, it was reported that while increased use of monetary rewards was cited by national research as a means of modestly increasing client participation, there were no official analysis to report specific to the FLOW program, but that TCB felt client stipends appear to increase enrollment of youth in their program and was looked upon as a method of securing participation successfully in other Worcester area programs too.

In a response to a question of the amount of proposed CDBG funding to be used for direct client stipends, it was reported that 13% of the proposed program budget would be thus used.

There was further discussion between CDAC members and the City staff regarding the eligibility of using CDBG funds to pay direct client stipends. Research confirmed that with some exceptions, HUD regulations generally prohibited the use of CDBG to pay for cash stipends to program clients. While city staff had provided said information to the public during the Funding Overview and Technical Assistance Workshop (held 11/15/2016), CDAC members suggested that the prohibition of the use of CDBG to pay cash stipends be incorporated into future RFP documents as well.

In response to a suggestion from a CDAC member, City staff stated that it would be unfair to the other applicants to allow TCB to change a key part of their overall proposal and re-submit with that alteration when all applicants are advised to submit applications consistent with the CDBG program rules and regulations.

3) Review and Discussion of City FY18 / Yr. 43 CDBG RFPs for Public Services Applications starting with letter “O” thru the letter “Y”.

The following 10 RFP applications were reviewed and discussed by the CDAC members:

- Oak Hill CDC – HomeOwnership Stabilization and Development Services
- Rachel’s Table – The Children’s Milk Fund
- Regional Environmental Council – UGROW
- Southeast Asian Coalition of Central Mass – Case Management
- South Worcester Neighborhood Center – Emergency Food/Case Management
- South Worcester Neighborhood Center – Youth Summer Program
- Worcester Community Action Council – Volunteer Income Tax Assistance*
- Worcester Housing Authority – A Better Life
- Worcester Housing Authority – Elder Transportation
- Y.O.U., Inc. – YouthConnect Summer

*Chairman Ed Moynihan stated publicly that he would file an Appearance of Conflict of Interest form just prior to the CDAC review and discussion of the Worcester Community Action Council – Volunteer Income Tax Assistance program. He filed the form because of the potential appearance of conflict given that his son works for a program administered by WCAC. He said that while his son does work for the WCAC administered Fuel Assistance Program, he stated that his participation in the CDAC review of the WCAC Volunteer Income Tax Assistance would not be compromised since his son works for a different WCAC program and not the Volunteer Income Tax Assistance program which is the program being reviewed and discussed at this meeting, but he would file nonetheless.

With regard to the Oak Hill CDC proposal, some CDAC members thought that the amount of CDBG funds being requested was relatively high and likewise that the proposed staff salaries were high. A CDAC member stated that the proposal was not a sole source program, but that it replicated home buyer education/foreclosure prevention courses offered in other areas of the region and provided referral links to homebuyer resources offered through the City of Worcester and other sources.

In response to a CDAC question of why the Oak Hill proposal did not mention Oak Hill CDC’s revenue from its rental portfolio as a source, City staff suggested that the proposal budget was focused on just the homeownership assistance program and was not inclusive of Oak Hill CDC’s entire operational budget or real estate portfolio. Also in an attempt to resolve some confusion with regard to Oak Hill CDC related RFPs listing two administrative sites, city staff reported that the NeighborWorks HomeOwnership Center operated on Green Street was a separate operation funded

largely from other resources and distinct from Oak Hill CDC's main administrative office located at 74 Providence Street.

As in past years, Rachel's Table – The Children's Milk Fund program continued to be highly regarded by CDAC members.

While CDAC members had positive comments with regard to the Regional Environmental Council's (REC) – UGROW program, particularly with its hands-on gardening training, provision of food education for inner city youth, and good leveraging of other resources, it was thought that the proposal suffered from a lack of clear, distinct, measurable outcomes at the client specific level.

In response to a CDAC question, it was noted that while the Southeast Asian Coalition of Central Mass (SEAC) had been funded for case management through CDBG in the past, last year the program was not recommended as a result of their having missed the RFP deadline. CDAC members had positive comments with regard to this year's SEAC proposal given that it demonstrated good leveraging, positive integration/linkages with other resources, and enjoyed strong community support as witnessed by the attendance of more than 20 youth to show their support for the program during the applicant's presentation to CDAC on 1/11/2017. City staff did note that SEAC's proposed budget appeared to show the entire agency's budget relative to the program budget instead of the intended program budget alone, and that their proposal also represented a significant increase in CDBG Cost per Unit (CPU) as compared to the prior year CPU.

CDAC members noted that while the South Worcester Neighborhood Center's (SWNIC) Summer Youth Program replicated their currently funded program, their proposed renewal of their Case Management program represented a significant increase in both CDBG funds requested and in the number of clients to be served. City staff noted that there were inconsistencies observed with the SWNIC Case Management proposal budget as submitted, and that there was also a significant increase in amount requested versus the prior year. One CDAC member expressed that as a result of their first hand observation, they now had a much greater appreciation of the value and need for case management services and the programs provided by SWNIC.

As during the last CDAC meeting (1/18/2017), there was continued discussion among CDAC members and city staff with regard to improving the impact of CDBG case management programs comprehensively, and concerns raised that as a result of the request to provide tangible outcomes, emergency food distribution was absorbing a disproportionate share of the outcomes related to case management programs. It was noted that emergency food distribution programs often act as a gateway incentive to attract and provide case management resources to those persons who are beset with other underlying problems.

As already noted on page 3, Chairman Ed Moynihan filed an Appearance of Conflict of Interest form just prior to the CDAC review and discussion of the Worcester Community Action Council – Volunteer Income Tax Assistance program. This program is currently being funded through CDBG, and as such did not generate much discussion among CDAC members.

CDAC members stated that the Worcester Housing Authority (WHA)'s A Better Life program proposal represented an improvement over the same proposal that they had submitted last year by demonstrating improved leveraging of other resources, resulting in a smaller ask of CDBG, and also addressing the prohibition of eviction of non-participating residents (which would only be relevant to federally funded housing and not to those units funded through the State). It was noted that if funded, the program would still be subject to conformity with any applicable federal regulations regarding the use of HUD CDBG funds.

While some CDAC members had favorable impressions of the WHA Elder Transportation program proposal, there were a number of questions asked of the City staff as a result of their review:

- What is the full scope of the proposed program budget as it relates to the driver's salary versus the purchase of equipment and/or a vehicle?
- What would be the proposed operational schedule of bus/driver including hours and times of operations, the projected demand for this service, the extent to which services are to be provided to Centro Las Americas as well as the Senior Center as mentioned in the proposal?
- How is this population currently being served?
- Does the Senior Center currently operate a transportation program for its clients or have access to such transportation services?

The Y.O.U., Inc. – YouthConnect Summer program is another CDBG public service program that continues to be highly regarded by CDAC members. It was stated that the program is doubly effective in that it provides low-income, inner-city youth with access to recreational opportunities and thus acts as a preventative to negative behaviors associated with disengaged youth.

Next Steps:

Following the conclusion of the above RFP reviews, discussion among the CDAC and City staff re-confirmed the next upcoming events:

- CDAC meeting, Wednesday, February 1, 2017 – Review Public Facilities and Inter-departmental RFPs
- CDAC members submit their RFP scores to the CDAC Recorder (Doug Arbetter) by close of business on Friday, February 3, 2017.
- CDAC Meeting, Wednesday, February 8, 2017 – Review of CDAC scoring of RFPs and discussion of content of draft letter to the City Manager from CDAC Chairperson with regard to this year's CDAC RFP review process

4) Adjournment

As there were no more items for discussion, the meeting was adjourned at 7:25pm.