

# City of Worcester, Massachusetts

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## COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT ADVISORY COMMITTEE

6/28/2018

City Hall Esther Howland Chamber  
455 Main Street  
Worcester, MA  
5:30pm

### MEETING MINUTES

CDAC present: Paula Stuart (Chair), Doug Arbetter (Vice Chair), Nicola D'Andrea, Danaah McCallum, Edward Moynihan, Michael Murphy, Arline Rosario, Dana Strong

CDAC absent: Suzanne Graham

City Staff: Greg Baker, Sandy Amoakohene, Stephen Hill, Tony Miloski

#### 1) Call to Order

The meeting was called to order by Chairperson Paula Stuart at 5:30 pm. The following items were distributed to each CDAC member at the start of the meeting:

- Agenda
- Minutes from 3/1/18
- CDBG Year 44 Draft Action Plan Recommendations (single sheet)
- Community Development Block Grant Application Summary Fiscal Year 2019 (Program Year 44) single sheets for:
  - Division of Inspectional Services - Systematic Housing Inspection Program
  - Division of Inspectional Services - Demolition of Slums and Blight
  - Housing Development Division – Affordable Housing Programs

#### 2) Review and Approval of 3/1/18 Minutes

A motion was seconded and passed to vote approval of the 3/1/2018 minutes. The CDAC voted 7-0 for their approval.

#### 3) Review of Year 44 CDBG Subrecipient Awards & Allocations

Greg Baker provided an overview of the Year 44 Subrecipient Awards and Allocations as listed in the Year 44 Draft Action Plan Recommendations handout

which had been reviewed and voted for approval by the City Council. As a result of an increase in CDBG funding (+10.5% from last year) the city was able to recommend an increased number of public service applications at a higher percentage of their requested amounts (91.6%, versus 88.0% last year) and provide full funding for each public facility proposal. On the other hand, Interdepartmental requests for Affordable Housing, Business Assistance, and Neighborhood Development programs could only be partly funded for their requested amounts owing to the need to provide CDBG funding to cover Section 108 Debt Service obligations and the City Manager's request to set aside \$1 million in CDBG to purchase a new fire truck. In response to a comment by a CDAC member, Greg acknowledged that these last two items had not been subject to review by the CDAC during their RFP review process and were the result of an internal request on behalf of the City Manager who at his discretion has the authority to make funding recommendations to address identified city needs.

The CDAC Chairperson expressed overall satisfaction with the high degree of consistency between the city's recommendations and those derived by CDAC as a result of their RFP application review and ranking process.

#### **4) Discussion of Interdepartmental Programs**

- a. Inspectional Services Department – Housing & Health Division
  - i. Systematic Housing Inspections ("Neighborhood Sweeps")
  - ii. Demolition of Spot Slums & Blight

Amanda Wilson, Director of Housing and Health Inspections, summarized the operations of the CDBG funded Systematic Housing Inspections program which was also described in a 9-page, Department of Inspection Services (DIS) CDBG Review document (containing several maps), that she provided to CDAC members during her presentation. She stated that the CDBG program provides proactive, targeted inspectional sweeps in low-and-moderate income neighborhoods "above and beyond" the regular, day-to-day, city-funded inspections and were described as "door to door, floor to floor, block by block" inspectional sweeps designed to proactively address nuisances and enforce regulations on items such as graffiti, tall grass, unregistered vehicles, rubbish, dilapidated garages/sheds, fencing, broken/missing windows/screens/siding, non-working smoke detectors, and other substandard housing conditions that impact on public safety and the quality of residential life. The sweeps are coordinated with other city departments such as the Police, Fire, Housing Development, and Neighborhood Development, and support revitalization efforts in areas such as Union Hill and Main South. She answered questions from CDAC members on topics such as resident responsiveness, compliance rates, turn-around times for violations, issues with absentee and investor-owned properties, foreclosures, receiverships, lead paint abatement, illegal activities, and emergencies.

Amanda also talked about and answered CDAC questions with regard to the DIS CDBG funded Demolition of Spot Slums & Blight. The activity also includes emergency securing of open and unsafe buildings. She reported that the city attaches liens on property taxes in an effort to recover costs for demolitions and receivership activities.

- b. Executive Office of Economic Development – Housing Development Division
  - i. Affordable Housing Programs & Projects

Miguel Rivera of the Office of Economic Development Housing Development Division (HDD) reported on Affordable Housing Development Programs and Projects. He provided two handouts to the CDAC during his presentation: Year 43 Project Budgets summary (single-sheet), and Affordable Housing - Executive Summary (4-pages). Miguel provided descriptive information including funding levels and units assisted for each of the housing programs administered by HDD: Elder Rehab, Owner-Occupied Rehab, Rental Rehab, Healthy Homes, Lead Paint Abatement and Reduction Activity, Down Payment Assistance, and Homelessness Prevention. He answered questions from CDAC members on a variety of topics including the targeting of investments (exemplified by recent investments in Union Hill neighborhood revitalization project), leveraging of HOME funds and other resources and the impact of housing developments on the city's tax base, issues pertaining to for-profit and non-profit housing development, efforts to deconcentrate mixed-income housing and promote mixed-use (commercial/housing) developments, turnaround times needed to complete projects, collaborative efforts with the Department of Inspectional Services to address code issues, working with banks, lenders, real-estate firms, and potential sponsors to launch Live Worcester Now! (a reinvigoration of the former Buy Worcester Program), lead abatement/reduction services, foreclosures, receiverships, and a newly proposed City initiative to "reduce chronic homelessness to zero".

The possibility of having CDAC members tour a housing development site was discussed. It was mentioned that such tours would have to be conducted informally outside of the regular CDAC meeting structure in order to be compliant with Open Meeting Law requirements.

It was agreed that the next CDAC meeting (planned for mid-September) would be conducted in a similar manner to today's meeting and be used to review CDBG public services and public facilities programs as had been agreed to at the CDAC meeting on 3/1/18.

## **5) Adjournment**

As there were no more items for discussion, the meeting was adjourned at 7:12 pm.