

HOUSING AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE MEETING
May 20, 2014
5th Floor Conference Room
MINUTES

Committee Members Present: Gordon Smith, Chris Pelly, Cecil Bothwell

Staff Present: Jeff Staudinger, Cathy Ball, Tara Irby, Sandra Anderson, Heather Dillashaw, Alesha Reardon

1. Minutes – The meeting minutes from April 15th were approved.
2. Updates
 - a. Housing Trust Fund: Jeff Staudinger provided an overview of the Housing Trust Fund. Currently, there is a negative balance to lend, mostly due to the timing of dispersements etc. By the end of fiscal year, we will see a positive flow.
 - b. East of the Riverway (EoR) Update:
 - i. Sasha Vrtunski and Burlington Associates provided a brief overview of the EoR gentrification study. Sasha explained that their next steps will include crunching numbers, and spending time with community members to understand community concerns and issues, and evaluate what strategies can be used.
 1. Mike Brown from Burlington Associates talked briefly about how their firm has extensive expertise in the field of community asset creation and sustainability.
 2. The contractors will also be looking at what other neighborhoods and have done. Mike Brown emphasized that he was not jumping to recommendations yet but it may be possible that Asheville will need to put protections in place to combat gentrification. Mr. Brown offered community land trusts as a common strategy, which ensures that the community can control future use and distribution of land/housing.
 3. There will be a public meeting surrounding the Alternatives to Gentrification study the week of June 23rd.
 - ii. Jeff Staudinger provided further updates on the East of the Riverway.
 1. 14 Riverside Drive: Steph Monson-Dahl is working to get construction documents completed.
 2. Tara Irby is working on public participation in the East of the Riverway.
 3. Last month a TIGER VI application was submitted for \$14.6 million. The outcome of that grant would result in development of multimodal pathways, greenways, complete streets etc. Jeff Staudinger said the application requests about 50% of the project cost, which Jeff hopes will be considered strong leverage.
 4. Cathy Ball mentioned the City is also requesting TDA grant money. Cathy explained that the TDA grant will have some overlap with the TIGER VI grant with Town Branch and Clingman Forest.
 - c. Eagle Market Place Update: Jeff Staudinger provided a brief overview of construction progress at the site. Jeff explained there will be a huge concrete pour soon and there are no obstacles at this time. Time is the greatest challenge and the contractors are committed to trying to stay within the planned timeframe.
 - d. Affordable Housing Advisory Committee Update: Jeff Staudinger shared that AHAC committee members are making presentations to City of Asheville boards and commissions on affordable housing during the months of May, June and July.

- e. Personnel Update: Jeff Staudinger explained that the Community Development Department is short staffed right now. Jeff hopes to fill the Community Development Analyst position soon.

3. Unfinished Business

- a. Strategic Partnership Fund (formerly Outside Agency Grants) Schedule: Jeff Staudinger reviewed the SPF process, and HCD Committee members reviewed the application summaries and then made recommendations for funding (see below). HCD Committee members also heard testimonies from several organizations in support of their application for funding.
 - i. Asheville Buncombe Food Policy Council has withdrawn their application.

Applicant	Amount Requested	Project	Committee Recommendation
Appalachian Sustainable Agriculture Project (ASAP)	6,400	Growing Minds At Market	5,000
Asheville Area Arts Council	12,500	Creative Industry Entrepreneurship Program	10,000
Asheville Art Museum	10,000	More Than Math	0
Asheville Design Center (ADC)	4,000	Outdoor Experiential Learning Center	4,000
Asheville Downtown Association	15,000	Pack Square Park Movie Series	0
Asheville Greenworks	20,000	Diverse Greening Activities	10,000
CAPS	5,000	Preventing Child Abuse	5,000
Children First	20,000	Learning Center	20,000
Green Opportunities (GO)	15,000	Community Garden at Reid Center	10,000
Homeward Bound	30,000	A-HOPE Day center	25,000
One Youth At A Time	7,000	In and After School Initiatives	4,400
Partners Unlimited	10,000	Student Grade Credit Recovery	2,500
United Way	5,000	2-1-1	2,500
TOTAL	159,900		98,400

- b. Affordable Housing Power Point: Jeff Staudinger ran through the presentation being given now through July by AHAC committee members to City of Asheville boards and commissions.
 - i. Gordon Smith recommended that HCD committee members take this presentation out to the broader community, and that each member come up with a few ideas of places to make this presentation. Gordon recommended CEBO and realtors.
 - ii. David Nash made a recommendation not to cut out the human interest slides, because they are so important. Mr. Nash also suggested making a video that tells the stories of people who have been able to buy or rent an affordable home.

4. New Business

- a. Eblen Charities 2012-2013 CDBG Balance: Jeff Staudinger explained that Eblen Charities has requested the remaining balance of CDBG funds totaling \$7,977.26 be reallocated to Contingency, with the City's thanks to Eblen Charities for their continued work in implementing emergency assistance programs to many in need in Buncombe County.
 - i. Cecil Bothwell made a motion to move; Chris Pelly seconded the motion.
- b. Groce Methodist Church Fee Rebate Request: Staff from Groce Methodist Church were present to explain their plans to convert part of its education building into permanent apartments for families transitioning from homeless to housing. Groce and City staff hope that affordable housing fee waivers

can be used to help the church accomplish this goal. Groce staff explained that they see this as an opportunity to try to keep people from falling down into lower levels of homelessness. Their education building provides an optimal way for utilizing underused space to house families who might not be able to stay together in a shelter situation in particular. Groce estimates that they will be able to provide 5-6 2-bedroom apartments at 600-square feet. Excluding utilities, Groce expects that rent would be \$600 per month.

- i. Heather Dillashaw discussed what is being done to provide housing for homeless; and how the church property could be utilized. Heather explained that the City needs to think about what we can do for churches, like fee waivers, in order to help churches provide housing assistance in this way.
- ii. Committee members discussed the distinction between city fee waivers and rebates; city needs to be clearer about how it supports affordable housing whether by fee rebates or waivers.
- iii. Gordon Smith said he was supportive of this request and would like staff bring draft policy to the HCD Committee on rebates and waivers as a policy framework is needed. Gordon also indicated that he was supportive of this as long as the waiver did not exceed \$10,000.
- iv. Groce representatives also discussed a second option to convert the space for elder housing, as their congregation may not approve of the original homelessness housing plan.
 - a. Committee members indicated their tentative approval, but if the Groce congregation pivots from homelessness to elder housing to bring the issue back to the HCD Committee for review.
- v. Cecil Bothwell made a motion to tentatively approve the fee waiver, pending receipt of final contractor's plans and specific fee waiver requests. The motion was unanimous.

5. Public Comment:

- a. David Nash, Housing Authority of the City of Asheville provided a brief overview of the Rental Assistance Demonstration program, which is creating HACA's shift from public housing (Section 9) to Section 8. Mr. Nash explained that due to past budget cuts and funding instability, HACA has had to lay staff off, reduce staff hours and cut benefits. HACA would prefer to be in more stable funding stream.
- b. Mr. Nash reviewed the benefits and protections for current residents, explaining there will be no major redevelopment or conversion in 2014. If HACA does major development in the future, residents who are relocated temporarily will have the right to return to the newly developed units.
- c. Mr. Nash said meetings were held last week for residents to explain these changes. Some residents, especially in Pisgah View and Lee Walker Heights, were concerned about displacement and being relocated out in the suburbs.
- d. Committee member Chris Pelly asked how these changes will affect residents day-to-day.
 - i. Mr. Nash explained that transitioning to Section 8 will eliminate service requirements and will cause some rents to increase, although most residents will see no change in rent. All rent increases will be phased in over 3 years.

6. **The next meeting of the HCD Committee will be June 17th, 2014 at 9:00am in the 5th floor Conference Room of Asheville City Hall. NOTE: The June 17 Meeting was cancelled; next meeting is July 15.**