

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE  
MEETING MINUTES OF JANUARY 7, 2015  
CITY HALL WEST CONFERENCE ROOM  
CITY OF WYOMING, MICHIGAN

MEMBERS PRESENT: Balk, DeJager, Hall, Krenz, Lopez, Ziemba

MEMBERS ABSENT: None

STAFF PRESENT: Rynbrandt, Director of Community Services  
Lucar, Administrative Aide

OTHERS PRESENT: Tracie Coffman, Director of the Essential Needs  
Task Force of Kent County  
Jessica Vail, Director of the HUD Continuum of  
Care of Kent County

Call to Order

Chair Ziemba called the meeting to order at 6:31 p.m.

Approval of Agenda

Motion by DeJager, supported by Lopez, to approve the agenda as presented. Motion carried unanimously.

Approval of Prior Committee Minutes

Motion by Hall, supported by Balk, to approve the prior meeting minutes of December 3, 2014. Motion carried unanimously.

Public Comment on Agenda Items

There was no public.

Presentation

Grand Rapids Area Coalition to End Homelessness - The Heart of West Michigan United Way submitted a Letter of Intent for renewal of their CDBG funding amount of \$10,000 for HUD Continuum of Care Administration. Tracie Coffman, Director of the Essential Needs Task Force (ENTF) of Kent County, noted the ENTF oversees five subcommittees, the HUD Continuum of Care being one of those subcommittees.

The United Way is the fiduciary and employee of record for the ENTF and the HUD Continuum of Care. Jessica Vail, Director of the HUD Continuum of Care, said their ultimate goal is to end homelessness in Kent County. In 2013, they assessed 850 families, 1,700 adults and 150 unaccompanied youth. They have a “housing first” philosophy, where their first priority is to secure housing for the homeless, and then move forward in addressing their other needs. They use two primary tools: 1) Rapid Rehousing – Providing a short-term subsidy for rental assistance and 2) Permanent Supportive Housing – Providing long-term rental assistance for the homeless with special needs, disabilities, etc. They prioritize assistance based on the highest need for both these programs. Of the calls taken through their central intake system within the last year, 700 reported a Wyoming zip code as their last address.

Hall asked how the City of Wyoming rates as a partner in their efforts. Vail replied the City of Wyoming has been a constant partner, with Rynbrandt serving on the steering committee for both the ENTF and the Grand Rapids Area Coalition to End Homelessness and HUD Continuum of Care. Public Housing Director Rebeca Venema is also part of their coordinated assessment system. Coffman emphasized the large level of need in the city of Wyoming, evidenced by the current poverty rates and the high number of reduced-cost school lunches.

DeJager asked what Wyoming residents can do to help the homeless problem. Vail replied the greatest hurdle is awareness of the problem itself. There is also a need for more affordable housing and public transportation options. Also, landlords need to be educated on the programs available to assist renters when they fall behind on payments. Rental assistance can prevent evictions, because evictions lead to homelessness. Rynbrandt noted HUD considers addressing homelessness a high funding priority.

### Committee Updates & Discussion of Presentations

HUD Determination of Cherry Health Services Application – HUD representatives have confirmed that the purchase of dental equipment is not an eligible expense under the CDBG program.

HUD Comment on Fair Housing Center Funding Requirements; Analysis of Impediments – HUD representatives confirmed that “HUD does not require specific fair housing services to be funded with CDBG. It only requires that the grantee document through its consolidated planning process how it will address affirmatively furthering fair housing and certify it has completed an Analysis of Impediments. The City of Wyoming may increase or decrease its funding to fair housing services, as well as, what sources it uses to fund fair housing activities (CDBG, local funds, in-kind, etc.). The selection of fair housing activities chosen by the City should align with addressing the impediments identified in its Analysis of Impediments.” Rynbrandt pointed out the list provided in the agenda packet which outlines actions recommended per the Analysis to Impediments study.

Rynbrandt referred to the Fair Housing Center's response to the Commission's question about their involvement with the HUD Continuum of Care. They are a registered member of the HUD CoC and serve on the coordinated assessment committee.

Rynbrandt also referred to a spreadsheet she developed showing itemized unit rate information for fair housing complaint investigation activities. The data was provided by the Fair Housing Center. The estimated cost per case is \$1,021, and the average number of tests per case is two. She used this information, coupled with information from the Commission's previous meeting discussions, in recommending a budget amount for this activity.

Preliminary Budget Considerations – Rynbrandt discussed the preliminary budget spreadsheet for 2015-2016 and staff's recommendations. The budget priorities of low, medium and high per activity are based on HUD's emphasis of addressing affordable housing and homelessness needs. These activities include housing rehabilitation, HUD CoC administration, fair housing services, code enforcement and Salvation Army rental assistance, which all meet either one or both of these HUD priorities. Community Policing was categorized as a low priority because it does not address those identified priorities. Rynbrandt asked for the Committee's affirmation of which activities they wish to fund. She also asked their recommendation on how an increase or decrease to the 2015/2016 grant award would be handled – by activity priority, across the board increase/decrease to all activities, or an increase/decrease to a particular activity.

Rynbrandt explained her recommendation of funding Fair Housing is based upon the Commission's desire to only support complaint based investigation, the estimated total cost per complaint as reported by the Fair Housing Center, and a review of the average number of annual complaints reported per year. The recommended amount is \$9,000. In addition she recommended up to \$1,000 for the annual Fair Housing Seminar hosted by the City and the Fair Housing Center. The training was noted as a priority within the Analysis of Impediments.

Motion by DeJager, supported by Krenz, to move the \$9,000 proposed for Fair Housing Services Investigation to the Rehabilitation Loan Program. Discussion followed.

Hall thought this would be too large of a cut to Fair Housing, and he did not want the City to appear as non-supportive of fair housing initiatives. DeJager withdrew her motion and Krenz withdrew her support.

Motion by DeJager, supported by Balk, to reduce the amount of funding to \$4,500 for Fair Housing Services Investigation and increase Rehabilitation Loan Program funding by \$4,500. Motion carried unanimously.

Motion by Hall, supported by DeJager, to reduce the amount of funding by \$1,000 for Community Policing, totaling \$54,000, to meet the HUD cap for Public Service activities. Motion carried unanimously.

Motion by Balk, supported by Lopez, that a decrease to the 2015-2016 grant award be divided equally between the Code Enforcement and Community Policing activities, with the rationale that these activities could possibly be funded with City general funds, and that an increase be applied to the Rehabilitation Loan Program, with the rationale that it is a federally recognized high priority activity. Motion carried unanimously.

The Commission indicated concurrence with all other budget recommendations.

A public hearing will be held at the February 4, 2015 meeting for the purpose of receiving comments or suggestions regarding activities and funding recommendations in the proposed Community Development 2015-2016 Action Plan.

#### Committee Member Concerns & Suggestions

There were no concerns and/or suggestions.

#### Public Comment

There was no public.

#### Adjournment

Motion by DeJager, supported by Balk, to adjourn the meeting. Motion carried unanimously.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:30 p.m.

The Committee will meet again on **February 4, 2015 at 6:30 p.m.**

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Kimberly S. Lucar, Administrative Aide