

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE
MEETING MINUTES OF NOVEMBER 5, 2014
CITY HALL WEST CONFERENCE ROOM
CITY OF WYOMING, MICHIGAN

MEMBERS PRESENT: Blok, Krenz, Lopez, Ziemba

MEMBERS ABSENT: Balk, DeJager, Hall

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

OTHERS PRESENT: Captain Kim Koster, Wyoming Public Safety
Jim DeLange, Chief Building Official
Dave Rupert, Property Compliance Analyst
Brian Patterson, Director of Compassion This Way

Call to Order

Vice-Chair Krenz called the meeting to order at 6:32 p.m.

Approval of Agenda

Motion by Blok, supported by Ziemba, to revise the agenda to postpone the Election of Officers until the December meeting when the full committee is present. Motion carried unanimously.

Approval of Prior Committee Minutes

Motion by Ziemba, supported by Blok, to approve the prior meeting minutes of October 1, 2014. Motion carried unanimously.

Public Comment on Agenda Items

There was no public.

Letters of Intent

Process Review & Identification of those Received – Rynbrandt noted the Letters of Intent submittals were due by October 23rd. She referred to a spreadsheet listing the submittals received and describing the types of activities and amounts requested. She explained that there would be four presentations given that evening – Community Policing, Code Enforcement, Housing Rehabilitation and Compassion This Way. After these presentations, the Committee would then decide which other potential sub-recipients would give presentations at the December meeting.

Presentations

City of Wyoming Public Safety–Community Policing – Captain Kim Koster noted their goal is to continue to partner with the neighborhood groups, schools and businesses within the identified CDBG target areas. The Community Services Officer is involved with the five neighborhood watch groups within the target areas and their meetings, business group meetings, monthly crime analysis, school involvement, multiple housing management partnerships, the crime prevention through environmental design program, foot patrols and the Wyoming/Godfrey Lee schools truancy programs. Their request is for continued funding of \$55,000.

Lopez asked if the Community Services Officers worked only in the CDBG target areas. Captain Koster indicated CDBG funds are only used in the target areas, but the program is City-wide. The total cost of this program is about \$725,000, with funding from the Public Safety millage, the school districts and CDBG.

Blok lives in the Godfrey-Lee area, and said it is good to know they are so involved with the schools.

It was the consensus of the Committee to recommend continued funding of this activity.

City of Wyoming Inspections–Code Enforcement – James DeLange, Chief Building Official indicated they are asking for continued funding of \$55,000 for this program. This is a reduction from previous years, since HUD rules have changed in not allowing funds to be spent on code enforcement abatement activities. He introduced Dave Rupert, Property Compliance Analyst, who gave a presentation on how CDBG monies are used for Code Enforcement activities through the Inspections Department. The City is seeking funding for its Code Enforcement Program to maintain a code compliant community within qualified low-moderate income target areas. This will be accomplished through pro-active code enforcement and response to citizen complaints within these areas. The need for the program is demonstrated by the number of property maintenance related complaints the City receives annually. About 1/3 of the total number of complaints are located within CDBG areas. CDBG funding will help the Inspections Department resolve many of those complaints in lower income qualified areas. The City will use other funding sources to achieve code compliance within the community as a whole. The CDBG Code Enforcement supported program, along with the general Code Enforcement program, are part of a coordinated effort by the City to address blight within neighborhoods. The total cost of the program is about \$349,000, which includes the CDBG funding.

Lopez did not see why CDBG dollars are being used for code enforcement when it is something the City must fund anyway. Rynbrandt replied the City's general fund does not currently contribute money for code enforcement. The Inspections Department is basically self-funded through revenues, predominantly building permit fees. If there are no CDBG funds for this activity, then code complaints will be further delayed. Currently there are about 743 open complaints, with only one full-time equivalent employee to

address them. This is one of the services categorized as most important to citizens in previous surveys.

Blok thought this activity fits in with the bigger picture as far as the prevention of slums and blight.

City of Wyoming Community Development – Housing Rehabilitation Program – Kim Lucar, Administrative Aide for Planning and Community Development, gave a presentation on the history, administration, goals and successes of the Housing Rehabilitation Program. CDBG funds have been used for this program since 1976, helping 1,316 homeowners over the past 38 years. Housing Rehabilitation is given high priority within CDBG nationally because it meets all three of HUD's National Objectives: Benefits to low- and moderate-income (LMI) persons; aids in the prevention or elimination of slums or blight; and meets a need having a particular urgency (urgent need). In 2013-2014, 16 homeowners were assisted. For 2014-2015, since funding was reduced, approximately 13 homeowners will be assisted. She showed before and after photos of some of the rehabilitation work that has been accomplished. There is a high demand by citizens for this program, with currently 54 people on the waiting list.

Compassion This Way-Taft Adopt A Block Program – Director Brian Patterson indicated they have been operating the Taft Adopt A Block program for the past three years. Their initial goal was to establish themselves in the neighborhood, and now they are considered the neighborhood's community center. They are asking for the same funding as the last three years - \$10,000 for their office rent/utilities and \$5,500 for program expenses. One of their major goals has been to promote cooperation among the neighbors, the schools, the Police Department and the overall community. They have seen a reduction in crime, an increase in employment and improved communication in the neighborhood. He presented a letter from Officer Jason Caster praising the services provided by this program. Some of the services they provide are a food pantry, K-12 tutoring, adult literacy, block parties, youth leadership, an on-site information center, job screening and referral services. Notable accomplishments are continued tutoring of students, with shown academic improvement, distributing summer lunches for 50 children four days per week for 10 weeks, feeding families through the food pantry, 13 adults receiving their GED's, placing 19 youth in summer jobs, and placing 12 adults with jobs. They continue to partner with Wyoming Public Schools, the Wyoming Police Department, Lighthouse Properties and the Buist Community Center. Some of their plans for the 2015-16 year will be to add parenting wisely classes and summer camps for children ages 8 – 14 years.

Blok asked how they maintain stakeholders when this is such a transient neighborhood. Patterson replied Lighthouse Properties is a stakeholder and is making a major difference as landlords. He also makes sure residents are asked to participate with events in order to encourage a sense of pride and ownership in the neighborhood.

Lopez asked if the neighborhood was aware of the CDBG funds being used for this program. Patterson indicated he has made the residents and others involved aware of this. Lopez questioned the fact that their rent amount has been reduced, but they are

still asking for the \$10,000. Patterson said they did receive a rent reduction last year. The rent should run about \$2,400 less this coming year.

Krenz asked how they would fund this program without the CDBG funding. They have received a \$4,000 commitment from the Sebastian Foundation and hope to receive \$2,500 from Lighthouse Properties. They are pursuing other funding. Krenz noted, since the CDBG funding was originally intended to be seed money over three years for program start up, she asked if phasing out funding would be possible while they pursue other funding sources. Patterson thought phasing out their funding over a three-year time period would be best.

Rynbrandt asked if he could work with Lighthouse Properties to provide any data showing how the neighborhood has become less transient since the program's inception. Also, any data from Wyoming Public Schools and/or the Wyoming Police Department would be helpful regarding the program's impact on truancy rates and transiency. Patterson would try to obtain this data. Rynbrandt asked the location of their food truck programs. Patterson responded Sunflower Apartments, Prairie Creek Apartments and York Creek Apartments. Rynbrandt asked, when the Taft area is stabilized, is there an opportunity to redirect funds to another area of the city for seed money to do a similar program, such as at the apartment complex on Madison in the Godwin Heights area. This apartment complex has been identified by the Police Department as having challenges with crime activity. Patterson said this is a definitely a possibility.

Selection of Presentations for December Meeting

Determine Invitees for Additional Presentation, Consideration – Rynbrandt went through a spreadsheet summarizing each request. The Committee asked the following applicants be brought in at the December meeting to give presentations: Cherry Street Health Services, Fair Housing Center of West Michigan, Habitat for Humanity, Home Repair Services of Kent County and Salvation Army Social Services. The United Way for HUD Continuum of Care Administration shall be considered for funding; however, a presentation is not necessary at the December meeting. The HUD CoC is a national identified priority. The other applicants will be notified of denial.

Committee Member Concerns & Suggestions

There were no concerns and/or suggestions.

Public Comment

There was no public.

Adjournment

Motion by Blok, supported by Lopez, to adjourn the meeting. Motion carried unanimously.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:20 p.m.

The Committee will meet again on **December 3, 2014 at 6:00 p.m.** Pizza and beverages will be available.

Kimberly S. Lucar, Administrative Aide