

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE  
MEETING MINUTES OF DECEMBER 3, 2014  
CITY HALL WEST CONFERENCE ROOM  
CITY OF WYOMING, MICHIGAN

MEMBERS PRESENT: DeJager, Hall, Krenz, Lopez (arrived at 6:55 p.m.), Ziemba

MEMBERS ABSENT: Balk

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

OTHERS PRESENT: Representatives from:  
Fair Housing Center of West Michigan  
Cherry Street Health Services  
Habitat for Humanity of Kent County  
The Salvation Army Social Services  
Home Repair Services of Kent County

Call to Order

Chair Hall called the meeting to order at 6:08 p.m.

Rynbrandt noted David Blok resigned from the Committee due to time limitations since he will now be serving on the Godfrey-Lee School Board.

Approval of Agenda

Motion by Ziemba, supported by Krenz, to approve the agenda as presented. Motion carried unanimously.

Approval of Prior Committee Minutes

Motion by DeJager, supported by Ziemba, to approve the prior meeting minutes of November 5, 2014. Motion carried unanimously.

Public Comment on Agenda Items

There was no public.

Letters of Intent Process Review

Rynbrandt explained there would be five presentations that evening. After the presentations, the Committee would then discuss which sub-recipients should be considered for budget purposes at the January meeting. She referred to a spreadsheet

listing the submittals received and describing the types of activities and amounts requested. Sample post-presentation questions were also provided.

### Presentations

Fair Housing Center of West Michigan – Executive Director Nancy Haynes and Director of Advocacy Elizabeth Stoddard were in attendance. Haynes mentioned they have seven full-time employees now serving a 12 county area. Their approach is to provide education in preventing discrimination, promoting compliance and increasing awareness of fair housing. They also provide research in monitoring the state of fair housing and identifying barriers to housing choice. In addition, they provide advocacy in investigating and addressing discrimination and protecting housing choice. They provide fair housing services by complaint assistance/investigation, housing testing, outreach and education.

As far as education and outreach, they are proposing to provide 10 hours. They would also be conducting the annual 3 hour training held at the Wyoming Library available to landlords, property managers, etc. They have covered a variety of topics throughout the years, such as laws related to advertising and renting to persons with disabilities. HUD's regulations regarding affirmatively furthering fair housing are changing, so they could also conduct trainings in this regard.

Regarding advocacy and enforcement, they propose up to 15 tests. The testing includes telephone calls, intake, research, surveys, interviews, etc. Each year they receive about 2,000 telephone calls, and only about 200 are legitimate fair housing complaints. They estimate the cost per test at \$1,000. This would include both complaint response testing as well as unsolicited testing.

Haynes proceeded to give examples of past cases they have resolved. They are requesting \$17,000 to provide these fair housing services.

DeJager asked if the testing included home owners or renters. Haynes replied it includes any housing transaction. She mentioned they partner with the Home Builders Association.

Ziamba asked how many tests they do per complaint. Stoddard replied every case varies based on the circumstances of that particular case. She estimated 2 – 3 tests per complaint. They did 350 tests in 2014. About 15 of those were covered by the Wyoming contract. When a complaint comes in, they do not turn anyone away.

Hall asked what constitutes the increase from the current \$15,000 to \$17,000. Haynes responded they wish to do 10 hours of additional education and outreach. Rynbrandt asked how they would propose billing for this. Stoddard estimated at \$100 per hour, which includes preparation and travel. She could provide them with a detailed

breakdown. Hall asked how they delineate which cases are billed to the Wyoming contract. Haynes said they check the address during the intake process to make sure they are a resident of Wyoming.

The presentation concluded and Committee discussion followed.

Krenz did not think their answers were specific enough regarding the breakdown for costs and services. Other Committee members expressed concern that services should be provided based on the property being located in Wyoming versus residency in Wyoming. Ziemba said he would like to know how they are connected with the Coalition to End Homelessness.

Cherry Street Health Services – Tasha Thomas, Chief Clinic Operations Officer from the Wyoming Community Health Center, along with two other representatives, were in attendance. Cherry Street Health Services' primary focus is to provide quality care to those who cannot access health care through other providers and need a health care home. They have more than 20 sites in underserved areas, with currently over 80 employees and 60 health care providers. At the Wyoming Community Health Center, dental services are provided by four dentists and two dental hygienists. Ninety percent of the people served live in Wyoming. The need for dental services here has increased by 80%.

(Lopez arrived at this time.)

Their one-time request is for \$35,000 to increase access to dental services for low to moderate income (LMI) persons at the Wyoming Community Health Center, through the purchase of dental equipment to complete an additional dental operatory available for service delivery. They began their capital campaign in 2012 to cover renovations of the building and purchase of equipment. They have reached 93% of their goal, and this assistance would bring them closer. With 76% of their patients being below 200% of poverty level, this funding can provide an additional 1,520 dental patient visits annually.

Hall asked if purchase of equipment was an eligible CDBG expense. Lucar noted dental services are eligible, but she would have to research whether equipment was an eligible CDBG expense. Thomas indicated they could give the Committee a detailed list of equipment.

DeJager asked how they verify income for eligibility purposes. Thomas said they use only official documentation, such as W-2's, income tax forms, Medicare statements, free and reduced lunch verification, etc. DeJager asked if they serve many senior citizens. Thomas replied they serve many seniors, and receive funds from the Area Agency on Aging through the Kent County Senior Millage.

The Committee asked for a detailed list of dental equipment and a breakdown of costs. They also asked Lucar to research the HUD regulations to determine whether purchase of equipment is an allowable CDBG expense.

Habitat for Humanity of Kent County – Ivor Thomas, Director of Community Development, and Kristin Tiemeyer, Community Development Specialist, were in attendance. With their current CDBG award, they are doing minor home repair on homes in the Godfrey-Lee neighborhood area. Since they are finding that more significant home improvements are needed in this area, such as roof replacements, they are asking for an increase in funding. They are requesting \$40,000 to rehab 8 homes, at \$6,250 per home.

Lopez asked how many homes they have rehabbed so far with the current funding. Thomas replied two out of the eight are finished, and they are on schedule.

Hall asked if they found the CDBG grant regulations difficult from an administrative standpoint. Thomas replied they are used to working with grant funding and government entities.

Rynbrandt mentioned their contract calls for monthly invoicing and an invoice has not yet been received. Thomas indicated the first invoice will be submitted soon, but he could not give an exact date. Rynbrandt asked if they plan to spend down the entire grant award. Thomas responded affirmatively.

Ziamba asked if aesthetic issues are being addressed with CDBG funds. Thomas said yes, they are making external repairs with the CDBG funding, which include landscaping improvements, siding, front porches and railings. The external repairs make a difference in the neighborhood, but they continue to find a greater magnitude of need in this particular area, such as for roof replacement.

DeJager asked if they receive CDBG funds from the City of Grand Rapids or Kent County. Thomas said they did not.

Lopez asked how they let the public know about Wyoming's investment in their program. Thomas said their brochures are distributed to a 12,000 member databank. Lopez pointed out the brochure provided did not include the City of Wyoming.

Hall asked for any stories Thomas could share about their work. Thomas mentioned a particular family in need of a roof replacement in the Godfrey-Lee neighborhood.

Rynbrandt suggested a meeting be scheduled to evaluate the current contract as far as opening it up to possibly fund furnace and roof replacement instead of only exterior minor home repairs. Krenz mentioned the City's Housing Rehabilitation program allows for emergency furnace and roof replacements. Rynbrandt said if it is not categorized as an emergency through that program, then the client has to be put on the one to two-year long waitlist. The Committee agreed the current contract should be re-evaluated.

The Salvation Army Social Services – Laruen Baker, Director of Housing Services, was in attendance. She expressed the need for affordable housing in this community. Lack

of housing affordability is one of the top reasons that lead people into homeless situations. They are requesting \$20,000 in CDBG funding to help eight families facing eviction with short-term rental assistance and supportive services. \$16,000 would be for financial assistance funds and \$4,000 for supportive services funds. Up to \$2,000 would be provided per household. For this program they propose to focus on families with children.

Hall asked if they have other funding sources. Baker replied MSHDA provides them with ESG grant funding. Hall asked if the funding will make a significant impact on Wyoming's citizens. Baker replied, eight families will most likely be able to stay in their homes and their children will be able to stay in their current schools.

Lopez asked how they would let the public know about Wyoming's investment in their program. Baker noted, through the 211 referral process, their housing assessment service informs citizens of the assistance available in a particular area.

Lucar mentioned the HUD CDBG Activity Subsistence Payments covers short term rental assistance of up to three months. She knew CDBG funds could fund the \$16,000 for rental assistance, but did not believe the \$4,000 for supportive services would qualify.

Home Repair Services of Kent County – Dave Jacobs, Executive Director, and Bob Hengeveld, Repair Program Manager, were in attendance. Jacobs mentioned HRS has been working with the City since 1999, and they have been in existence for 35 years. Their mission is to strengthen vulnerable Kent County homeowners, because strong homeowners build strong communities. Vulnerable homeowners are usually low income, elderly, disabled and/or debt-ridden. Their programs include a fix-it school, remodeling together program, financial counseling and air sealing. Wyoming CDBG funds currently assist with the minor home repair program and the access modification program. During the last 12 months, 70 homeowners received minor home repair assistance, and there were a total of 133 requests. They are asking for a \$5,000 increase to help meet this need, for a total of \$45,000 for minor home repair. They have assisted 5 homeowners during the last 12 months with access modification services. They are requesting to keep funding at the current level of \$20,000.

Hengeveld noted, with the recent amendment to their contract, they can now fund up to \$3,500 for emergency replacement of a furnace.

Hall asked if one activity was given a higher priority than another. Hengeveld said no. Minor home repair and access modification services are both on a need basis.

Rynbrandt asked if there were any other organizations within Kent County that built handicapped ramps for low-income people. Jacobs did not know of any. Wyoming is currently paying for a fraction of the current need.

### Committee Discussion of Presentations

The Committee agreed it would be beneficial to fund Cherry Street Health Services for at least a portion of their request if purchase of equipment is determined to be a CDBG-eligible expense.

The Committee agreed Compassion This Way funding should be cut to \$13,000 since their rent has been reduced, and then continue to partially cut funding in future years in hopes they establish other funding sources.

The Committee agreed to recommend funding the Fair Housing Center for at least \$1,000 for the annual educational outreach event, but other funding would require further consideration. Rynbrandt would talk to our HUD representative to find out what is required as far as funding fair housing.

Ziemba asked if the amounts usually funded for Community Policing and Code Enforcement could be adjusted. Rynbrandt indicated that yes, these funds could be recommended for adjustment. She would consult with the City Manager in this regard.

Lopez was disappointed that the City of Wyoming is not listed in Habitat for Humanity's brochure. Also, they need to comply with the monthly invoicing requirement in the contract. Rynbrandt would meet with Habitat before the next CD Committee meeting to discuss the contract and find ways to work with them in meeting their goals.

Rynbrandt mentioned the HUD Continuum of Care would be presenting in January.

### Election of Officers

The nominations were opened for the office of Chair. Krenz nominated Hall. Lopez nominated Ziemba. There were no other nominations and the nominations were closed. Ziemba was elected 3 – 2 for the office of Chair.

The nominations were opened for the office of Vice-Chair. Lopez nominated Hall. There were no other nominations and the nominations were closed. Hall was unanimously elected for the office of Vice-Chair.

### Committee Member Concerns & Suggestions

There were no concerns and/or suggestions.

### Public Comment

There was no public.

Adjournment

Motion by Krenz, supported by Hall, to adjourn the meeting. Motion carried unanimously.

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

The Committee will meet again on **January 7, 2015 at 6:30 p.m.**

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Kimberly S. Lucar, Administrative Aide