

PUBLIC HEARING

A Public Hearing was conducted by the Human Affairs Committee on Wednesday, April 21, 2004 at 7:05 p.m. in the Aldermanic Chamber.

Chairman Lori Cardin presided.

Members of the Committee present: Alderman Marc W. Plamondon, Vice Chair
Alderman Kevin E. Gage
Alderman David D. Lozeau

Members of the Committee absent: Alderman-at-Large James R. Tollner

Also in Attendance: Alderman-at-Large David W. Deane
Alderman Kathryn D. Vitale
Alderman David MacLaughlin

PUBLIC HEARING

R-04-35

AUTHORIZING THE MAYOR TO APPLY FOR THE COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT BLOCK GRANT AND HOME INVESTMENT PARTNERSHIPS GRANT, FISCAL YEAR 2005

TESTIMONY IN FAVOR

Martha Green, Area Agency of Greater Nashua, 144 Canal Street. The agency owns five properties in the City of Nashua that are residential homes for ten lower income individuals with developmental disabilities. We have submitted an application to the CDBG grant to assist us in various renovations for two of these properties. Some of the things would be house siding, upgrading of an existing driveway, replacement of a 20-year old fence and laminate flooring. We are hopeful that you will favorably consider our application for the CDBG grant.

David Villiotti, Executive Director of Nashua Children's Home, 125 Amherst Street. I would first like to thank all of you for your continued support of Nashua Children's Home as we enter our second century of providing services to disadvantaged children and families of the area. I wanted to review some of the general benefits that accrue to the city from the mere existence of Nashua Children's Home. Presently we provide residential services to 46 New Hampshire families, a vast majority of those being Nashua residents. We also provide special education services. About 80 percent of the kids that live with us are identified with special needs. For every one of those Nashua kids that live with us that have special education needs and attend the Nashua schools is a direct savings to the special education budget in excess of \$20,000 per student per year. If any one of those kids was placed at a different facility outside of the City of Nashua, that's the payment that would need to be made to that other school district or

that other residential facility. That's a very real savings that accrues for every kid for every year to the special education budget.

Additionally we provide what is called a "youth attendance program" where we take kids referred directly by the Nashua Police Department for an overnight stay or perhaps a weekend stay. These are typically kids that are picked up that maybe run-aways from other cities, other states, or other status offending youngsters. If Nashua Children's Home did not offer this service, it would resolve in the patrolman being taken off of the street. These are kids that cannot be locked up over night, and the alternative would be to assign an officer to stay up with this youngster in an interview room at the police station overnight. They are able to place these kids with us, and we extend that service as a courtesy to the Nashua Police Department. The NPD then makes this service available to other police departments at their discretion.

Let me talk to you about the block grant proposal that we have that's been funded over a five-year period. We're ending the fifth year of that. The proposal was to provide funding for teen transitional living. Some of you may know that over 40 percent of this nation's homeless population are products of the foster care system. The foster care system includes kids that live in children's homes. I would often ask people how many of our children at the age of 18 could have lived completely on their own, even with the financial support of their families. Generally people don't think that many of their kids could have done that. Often times, as you know, we have kids 24, 25, 26 still living at home with their parents. Yet, the boys and girls of Nashua Children's Home that have had a lifetime of difficulty, heartbreak and abandonment are faced with living on their own as adult at the age of 18.

Two years ago, we opened our transitional living homes for teens 16 to 18 years of age. These are separate facilities. One is located at 119 Amherst Street; the other is located in our carriage house on the grounds of our girls' home at 86 Concord Street. In these facilities the youngsters are basically given a check by Nashua Children's Home every couple of weeks. They open checking accounts. They deposit these checks. They pay the bills at their facilities. They manage their checking accounts. They plan their menus. They shop for the groceries. They prepare their meals. They work at jobs. They schedule their appointments and arrange for their transportation. Essentially, they learn adult living skills by practicing adult living skills. It's not a text book type of course of classroom. They are actually out there living like adults while they are 16 – 18 years of age. Last year we had two of our girls – twin girls – that had been with us for a number of years, who are now college students, in the independent living home. They aged out. One is attending Plymouth State, and one is attending the Voc. Tech. They have been successful in doing that. One of our boys this year that's aging out of the independent living home will be going to Fort Leonard upon graduating from Nashua High. He will engage in basic training and is looking forward to a career in the military police.

The other project that we have going – and this is through HOME funds that come to the New Hampshire Housing Finance Agency – is another transitional living home. This time for young adults. What we understand is that the kids that come out of our independent living home may have the requisite skills to live as adults, but might not have the resources to do that. We're going to make a five-unit apartment building at 123 Amherst Street for youngsters in that situation. We're going to provide housing; we're going to provide ongoing staff support. The operation of that program is going to be

funded privately. We're not asking for anymore public funds for the operation of that program. We've been able to raise a substantial amount of private funding through foundations and such to help us with that project. That's going to open up in a couple of weeks. It's under construction right now, and we're looking forward to that.

Once again, thank you for all of your support for Nashua Children's Home.

Bridget Belton-Jette, Executive Director of Neighborhood Housing Services for Greater Nashua, 50 Tolles Street. We have truly been honored by the support that the city has provided us in our mission and our work. We operate three programs. Under our home ownership program, we have to date helped 155 low income families achieve home ownership in the Nashua area. We have lent \$610,000 of our own funds and those funds have leveraged an additional \$7.6 million. We operate seminars monthly, and we do individual counseling for people under that program. That program is available in Spanish and English.

Under that housing development program, which you have funded, we provide housing currently to 52 families in Nashua. Many of you are familiar with our projects. The Parkview project on Amherst Street was 18 units, 3 buildings. That had HOME and CDBG in it. Central Street, which was two single family rental housing, had HOME and CDBG in it. Pearl Street, again a two-family home and CDBG. We have 62 Ash Street which is CDBG. Our most recent large completed project was the JB Mallet Manor. That provides 22 units of low income housing for the elderly and also includes a wellness center in the lower level which is run by St. Joseph Hospital Parish Nurse Program. The families that we serve are the families that the city has identified in your recent housing report as most in need of housing. They really are elderly. JB Mallet was targeted to serve those persons that were 30 – 50 percent of median income. Most of our tenants there live just on social security. They don't have other options in housing, so Mallet offers them a truly enhanced housing because of the wellness center.

The project that we have been working on for which we are seeking HOME and CDBG funding is the conversion of the former Casimir Church property on Temple Street. Our proposal is to develop that into 28 units of family housing. The income range of the tenants will be 60 percent median income and less. Again, targeting the group which the city has identified in the affordable housing study as most in need of housing. In addition to that, I think it is a very good use of the site – the conversion of the church in this manner. The church has a lot of historic, cultural and emotional attachment to this city. Many people are vested in what will happen to it. Support for the project has been very high because it will continue to serve the community in a different capacity.

Again, we appreciate your support. We feel we have a partnership with the city that has served everyone well over the years. Thank you.

Carol Farmer, Community Council. We have put in this year for Phase 3 and Year 4 of a five year plan that we have filed with the Continuum of Care HUD program for Nashua. In the first year, you were able to help us get rid of our boiler system which was the original since 1939 in our red brick building at 7 Prospect Street across the street from Southern New Hampshire Medical Center. Last year you were able to fund an air conditioning project which we're still having some difficulty with. To get it done, Mr. Slabonick is helping us with some engineering plans. This year, what we are asking is

to help us replace some of the original windows in that 1939 building for some energy efficiency and to make the place more comfortable.

We serve just under 4,000 mentally ill people in this community in a year. We are very diligent about finding the money to operate and to pay our staff because most of what we do is provide mental and medical services to those people. We are hard-pressed ever to find money to take care of our facilities. This beautiful facility at 7 Prospect is sadly deteriorating before our eyes. We're very appreciative for what you have been able to do to help us so far and hope that you'll be able to continue so we can continue to serve these people. Thank you.

Sarah Verralla, Micro-Credit, New Hampshire. Micro-Credit New Hampshire is a non-profit organization that helps entrepreneurs that are seeking to either start or enhance their micro businesses. We offer mainly three core services. We offer access to capital, networking opportunities and technical assistance. Last year thanks to the support that we received from the City of Nashua, we were able to offer ten business skills workshops in the city. We had a total of 49 people attending our workshops. Some of the workshops dealt with market research, market planning, marketing on a shoestring, is self-employment for me, and an IRS multi-member LLC workshop. We also did a total of 16 workshops in Spanish also covering some of the same topics as self-assessment for me, a marketing series and a financial planning series here in the city. And, we had a total of nine informational meetings as well. We currently have one business support group that meets the third Thursday of the month from 6:30 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. for people that are interested in getting a little bit more support while they try to go through the difficult task of starting or keeping their business up and running. We're very thankful the support that we have received from the City of Nashua.

Alphose Hattenschellwer. I reside at 24 Mulberry Street. I am also a member of the Board of the Neighborhood Housing Service of Greater Nashua. You've heard the details from Bridget, the Executive Director. I would just like to make a couple of comments specifically with regard to the proposed construction at St. Casmir's Church. I think it is clear that with the churches that have been shut down by the diocese and are now available, and the necessity for the city to generate as much property tax revenues as is possible, and the necessity of affordable housing for low and moderate income individuals in this city -which I think all of you are aware of is desperate - the support of this project which is already on the drawing boards to accomplish those aims is in the best interest of the city. I hope you will support it. Thank you.

Carol Blackwell, Business Manager for Nashua Center for the Multiply Handicapped, 18 Simon Street, Nashua. Last year you were kind enough to give us grant money to do ceiling tiles and to do the flooring in common areas. This year we are asking for some flooring for four bathrooms and some of the offices. In the bathrooms we are also asking for some new sinks and toilets.

We serve people who are severely handicapped. Nineteen people in our 38 group that comes to Nashua Center for a day program are from Nashua. Of those 19, 14 are in wheelchairs. The wheelchairs have done a bit of a number on some of the sinks and the toilets. We try to encourage independence, but the wheelchairs sometimes get in the way and they do some destruction. We do some fundraising. We are trying to get some of this done on our own, but we would appreciate your help again.

Alderman Deane

Are you facilities ADA compliant now – your bathrooms – or are you just looking to replace fixtures?

Carol Blackwell

We're looking to replace. We're all ADA compliant now.

Marie Swerble, Director, Nashua Pastoral Care Center. We are here applying for our third year of three grants for \$34,500 for 12 Concord Street – the Norwell Home. First I would like to thank you for your commitment the past two years. It was instrumental in helping us purchase that property. That property serves as a transitional housing site for young women between the ages of 18 and 30 with young children. We mandate higher education with that program. All of our mothers need to be enrolled in higher education because our goal is that they will be self-sufficient two years from entering our program. That site right now houses up to eight single mothers with their children at one given time. It's been truly phenomenal to the success rate of our program by having that as a Phase I to our program. They finish that with a 24/7 coverage and then they move into our independent apartments located on C Street and Vine Street. This year's CDBG funding will help us with more renovations that we need to do to that property. We have some plumbing issues that are not easy to repair because that building is joint masonry built and I'm told it is costly to get to the plumbing. Also the roofing will be an issue that we need to look at. When we purchased the building, they did tell us that within the third to fourth year we will need to replace the roof. I would like to thank you for your consideration in that also.

Just looking at the whole list presented in front of you, we work very closely with all the agencies. What you provide to all of the agencies is very, very instrumental to the whole community at large. I just wanted to thank you for that too.

Heather Tarr, Program Manager of Two Veteran Housing Programs with Harbor Homes, 12 Amherst Street. I am here to provide support on behalf of the Neighborhood Housing Services with continued support, especially with their efforts to provide housing at the former St. Casimir's. We believe that they provide a major resource to homeless in the community and are looking forward to a partnership with them with our homeless veteran's program. Thank you.

Kathy Hersh, Community Development Director. Good evening. My name is Kathy Hersh. I am the Community Development Director with the City. I am here with Jay Minkarah, the City's Economic Development Director, to speak in favor of CDBG funding for several City projects and programs.

These projects and programs were submitted to the Committee, but were not chosen to be included in the resolution before the Committee this evening. Our goal tonight is to convince you that City projects and programs are consistent with the goals of CDBG and in fact are critical to addressing the needs of our low and moderate income residents.

Please do not misunderstand me. We are fortunate to have so many incredible non-profit organizations focused on implementing the City's Consolidated Plan and so many worthy projects presented to the Board of Aldermen. Their work indeed improves the living situations of many of our needier population.

However, the City's Consolidated Plan and HUD in its definition of the purpose of CDBG recognize the valuable role *as well* of City projects and programs to improving the living situations of many of our needier population. As quoted from the State's CDBG web site, "The primary purpose of the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) program is the development of viable urban communities, by providing decent housing, suitable living environments and expanding economic opportunities, principally for persons of low and moderate income."

And indeed, the City of Nashua has a long history of CDBG funding for City projects and programs, understanding that public investment leads to private investment, and that job creation is one of the most viable solutions to addressing the needs of low and moderate income populations.

Historically, CDBG funds have been allocated by the City for numerous City projects. The sidewalks on Main Street, upgrades at 14 Court Street, improvements to Duschenes Oval, the Heritage Rail Trail, the Ash Street playlot, both skateboard parks, neighborhood street lights, a downtown storefront program, opportunities acquisition, and other public investments have all been partially funded by CDBG. And for good reason. Investment in the public realm encourages private investment. Have you ever noticed what happens when the City repaves streets and sidewalks and plants some trees on a rundown street? Next thing you know, the landlords and homeowners are improving their buildings. Not to be repetitive, but investment in the public realm encourages private investment. People want to feel good about where they live – not only the building but outside their building as well, part of which is public space and the City's responsibility.

Throughout the 1980s, the Board of Aldermen allocated about 50% of CDBG funds for public projects. Throughout the 1990s on average, funding for public projects was around 35%. Since the year 2000, the allocation of CDBG funds to City projects has averaged 13%. In preparation for this evening, I checked the CDBG allocations of three neighboring communities – Lowell, Portsmouth and Manchester - who are also direct recipients. Respectively, they spend 39%, 47% and 70% of their CDBG funds on public projects and programs.

Clearly, there is a change in the priorities of spending for CDBG in Nashua. We hope to convey to you tonight the value of public investment in conjunction with private investment to meet the primary purpose of the CDBG program – that is, the development of viable urban communities, by providing decent housing, suitable living environments and expanding economic opportunities. At this point I would like ask Jay to step through three of the projects that we had proposed for your consideration and then I will finish.

Jay Minkarah

To back up a little back, the permanent goal of the Economic Development Department is to foster the overall economic development of the City of Nashua. Essential to that is

a focus on the urban core in the downtown area and the neighborhoods around it. We have a focus on trying to combat light and disinvestment through redevelopment of brownfields, stimulating the redevelopment of underutilized buildings and sites throughout the city, particularly concentrated in the urban core to attract new jobs to the city and to retain existing jobs. In much of our effort, what we are seeking to do, and I think some of the things that Kathy has talked about is strategically using public dollars to stimulate private investments. The projects that I'm going to talk to are all targeting toward that end.

The first one is the Streetscape Design Plan for the Neighborhoods on the Downtown Fringe. I think as most of us know we do have a vibrant downtown on Main Street. That was something that was recognized in the Downtown Master Plan that was adopted last year. If I could just quote from the Downtown Master Plan it also notes: "The seam between the neighborhoods and Main Street is ragged. Spring and Elm Street are characterized by disinvestment, surface parking lots and unrepaired confusing one-way streets." That's a problem that needs to be remedied. Basically what this project intends to do is in many ways to do what the street improvements using CDBG funds that we did years ago on Main Street. The streetscape work, the landscaping, the sidewalk improvements. We want to do the same thing that that did for Main Street to the streets surrounding Main Street, taking it into the neighborhoods on the fringe. That's primarily through improvements to the parking lot, the alleyways and walkways that connect the neighborhoods on the east and west of downtown to Main Street proper, as well as providing lighting, improving public safety, with the ultimate goal of stimulating reinvestment in those areas.

The next project, which actually you did put in some of the funding that we had requested, is the restoration of the bell from the old city hall. That bell is, of course, an important (inaudible) of Nashua's history. It originally was housed in city hall. It was actually purchased initially by the fire department in the old city hall that was further down the road on Main Street, a little bit north on the other side of the street where city hall is housed today. It was removed from city hall, I believe in 1939, and put in the orthodox church on Ash Street where it was essentially forgotten until it was rediscovered a couple of years ago. It is now sitting in front of 14 Court Street. What this project would do would move it maybe even 100 feet from where it is, restore the bell and put it in what we would consider an appropriate setting. It also does something else. It re-establishes the axial relationship of the Ashman-Benjamin plan that was created for Nashua in the 1820s which originally had an east-west access on what is Factory and Temple Street where the Olive Street Church once was. That performs an access with the tower from the clock tower which is gone now. We would like to put it in that location, restore that relationship and by doing that hope to stimulate more investment and draw more downtown towards the Spring Street area which again is a goal of the master plan.

The final thing that we're looking to do is to continue the amount of funding that we have done previously for the business manager in the community development division for the program coordinator in the economic development department. I think as some people know, we had an assistant economic development director that is not being funded currently so we do have a part-time project coordinator. Her work is absolutely critical to what we do. I depend on her completely. Going back to some of my earlier comments, significant focus of what we do in the economic development department is work in the urban core, downtown and the surrounding neighborhoods. This position has a heavy

concentration in those areas doing field work, investigations, maintaining information bases and doing research for us. For us, funding for that position is critical to maintaining our mission.

Kathy Hersh

There's three other projects that we had requested funding for. One is Construction Documents for Thoreau's Park. Thoreau's Park is located down Main Street by the Main Street Marketplace. It is across from the Main Street Marketplace. It is that lot next to Salmon Brook. Actually it is on both sides of Salmon Brook. It really looks abandoned. It is abandoned, and it does not reflect well as a gateway to our city. Mr. Newman did put in his memo about Thoreau's Park eligibility and the fact that using a service area radius of 1500 feet, analysis shows that 2560 of the 3898 persons or 66 percent of those living in this area are low to moderate income. Our plan is to create a park there. A park that would connect the neighborhoods, the Adult Learning Center, the Elm Street Junior High School, and all of that with the shopping and whatever else is going on on Main Street and to provide not only the connections but provide the opportunity for a place to toss a ball, to read a book – that open space that I think is really important in urban neighborhoods. We have a significant amount of money for this through the Department of Transportation. They have about \$235,000 set aside to finish this park. It is not adequate to put in things like the irrigation system which we really should put in whenever we put in any green space, the sidewalks and some of the things like that. But it gives us a good start. What we would ask for the funding for is for the construction documents. I think it is really important that the city be in the lead with the design of this park so it reflects what the neighborhood and the area would like to see for a park rather than what DOT designs for a park for the city. That's why that money has been requested.

The second request that I am going to talk about is the concept plan for the Riverfront Promenade. We are very grateful for the funding last year from CDBG to help us to do the construction documents for the riverfront promenade at the old Goodale site. The riverfront promenade stretching from the Cotton Transfer Bridge on the west to the railroad bridge behind BAE systems on the east is a 1.6 mile loop. Right now we are doing pieces of it. What I would like to do is hire a consultant to come in, work with certainly the Board of Aldermen, work with the Parks Departments, work with the neighborhood and the businesses and create a conceptual plan that integrates all of it together so we're looking at it as one comprehensive plan as opposed to separate pieces.

The third request is the match for the Cotton Transfer Bridge. The cotton transfer bridge is behind Clocktower Place. It connects Clocktower Place with the Cotton Storage Bridge. It is the oldest tress bridge in the State of New Hampshire. We have Transportation Enhancement money to restore that bridge historically and also create a walking trail on top of it. However, when we went out to bid and we hired the consultant to do the design for it, we found out that we are short of funds. With this \$50,000 that would be 20 percent and we would be able to leverage 80 percent of the transportation enhancement funds to be able to finish that project.

At this point I would like to ask Gail Coffey, our grant writer, to come up and give you a brief overview of her work. I would also like to inform you at this time that we are very exciting to have found out last week that we received – thanks to Gail's efforts – the

\$20,000 grant from the New Hampshire Department of Resources and Economic Development toward the acquisition of the rail corridor section between Main Street and Spring Street. That entire corridor has been identified both as part of the Downtown Master Plan and as part of neighborhood meetings and is part of the East Hollis Street Master Plan process as something that is critical for the city to pursue. I'm pleased to be able to say that we were able to get that funding towards that.

Gail Coffey

I just want to give you an idea of what we've been up to since I've started in mid-August. I know Kathy put together a fantastic memo describing some of the work that I've done, and what we kind of started out with. I think there was a lot of concern about why we don't have more grants, how much time it takes to do these grants and the type of funding that we could apply for. I think Kathy outlined it pretty well in the memo. But what I did was pass out this timeline to give you an idea. Some of these are grants that we have applied for and some are grants that I am looking at. This gives you an idea of the different funding levels. Part of the process is when I first started there really was no database, no information whatsoever about grants available for community development projects. Also I think a lot of people were just trying to figure out exactly what areas they wanted funded, what were the priorities. I had to sit down with the different departments: planning, code enforcement, urban programs. It was actually Alan Manoian to find out what some of the projects were. We started off with that. Then I had to do some research to identify the types of funding sources that are available. I went through hundreds of foundations looking for those that would support municipalities for community development type projects. You did get a listing of some of the projects that we're looking at. That was sort of a long process in itself. By October we were ready to do some applying for grants.

Part of what that required is to look at some of the grant criteria. In the package that Kathy gave you, I think you have a good idea. Right now I'm working on this technical opportunity program grant. This is just the grant criteria. It's about 32 pages long of what you have to do to put together a grant for this. The grant is for a substantial amount of money. It can go from \$350,000 to \$700,000. What the city has to look at is how much money they can match. I've been real creative in terms of matching up with staff time and fringe benefits so we're able to apply for about \$100,000 and match it with \$100,000. That's very difficult to do. That's part of the restrictions that we have to look at - how much money there is to match, what kind of in-kind donations and creativity we have. The other part is to look at the criteria for a lot of these different grant programs. Some of them have very specific criteria. If you don't meet them and there's about a five to ten percent chance that most of the proposals get funded then we have to look at that and see if it's worth my time doing 100 hours doing a federal grant where there's a five percent rate of approval for all the applications that they have.

The project that we're working on right now is a wireless technology project which I think is ideal because code enforcement and the building safety department is real anxious to set up this field technology where they can actually use tablet pc's and do all their work out there - home inspections, code violations, check up on housing to make sure that it meets all the new code requirements. This fits in exactly with what they are looking for this federal grant so I think we have a good chance.

A couple of the other state grants that we have applied for, the state only so much money to fund. Some of the amounts were based on what the total grant amounts of money they have available. I think we did a good job with getting two grants from the state. We've only submitted seven proposals. At this point, about 25 percent of our proposals have gotten funded which is pretty good considering the competition. These days it is very fierce. Also, the amount of time it takes to write up the applications, get the letters of support. I have to do the budgets. I have to work with all these different departments. I'm working 20 hours a week. The amount of time it requires to prepare, write and submit these, you also have to look at. That's why the timeline starting in October to now is about seven months, and we already have seven proposals written. I think we really have a good start. I foresee especially with Jay now coming in that there's a lot of opportunity for economic development grants. Particularly with the two headlines in the Telegraph about what's happening with jobs in this area. I think that we really need to start looking at opportunities through economic development administration to help us re-stimulate the economy here. That can be through urban revitalization. There are a lot of opportunities out there to do that as well. Again, it's about 100 hours for a federal grant and probably 40 –60 hours of time for state.

Kathy Hersh

I'd like to close by quoting for you from the movie Seabiscuit. Seabiscuit is about a racehorse during the 1930s – the Depression. "They called it relief, but it was a lot more than that. It had dozens of names – NRA, WPA, the CCC. But it really came down to just one thing. For the first time in a long time, someone cared. For the first time in a long time you were no longer alone. In the end it wasn't about the dams, or the roads, or the bridges, or the parks, or the tunnels, or the thousands of other public projects that were built in those years. It was more invisible than that. Men who were broken only a year before suddenly felt restored. Men who had been shattered suddenly found their voice."

And why was that? Because these programs gave people work. And with work comes self esteem, self worth and self value. That's one of the reasons why we are really here tonight to ask for your support for some of our programs. Thank you.

Angie Kopka, 63 Buckmeadow Road, Nashua. The reason I'm here is because I'm a director of the Greater Neighborhood Services of New Hampshire. Before that it was something else, and before that it was something else. When it first started it was Nashua Housing, I think. It's kind of hard to remember because it's been about 20 years. But when this started, and it still is the same organization, we were given a mission to find affordable housing for the citizens of Nashua. We're all volunteers - all of the directors and all the people who really want to work with us. We volunteer our time, our knowledge and all of our efforts for affordable housing. Right now affordable housing is non-existent. Affordable housing has become one of those things that you wish wouldn't happen. But it has happened. We need affordable housing, and we have done quite well. Most of it has been through a lot of knowledge. Thank goodness we have Bridget. We have progressed quite a bit, but it is a non-profit organization. We need money to operate. We need money to try to find money for the project at St. Casimir's Church. That is quite an undertaking as you can well imagine. We do need the money. That always comes up: we always need the money. Therefore, we are asking tonight that you would consider giving us the money that we have asked for. It is going to be a development in the part of the city that hasn't had any development for

affordable housing. It is much needed. I really am very proud of the things that we have done. It's been a struggle, but we have done it because that's our mission. That's what we are supposed to do. Besides being affordable housing, it is wonderful for the people who have a decent house to live in. I have seen some of the ones that we have done over. You would not have gone in them. You would not have allowed your children in them. I am very thankful that I am on this committee. When I see the children going to school and being proud that they can come home to a decent house, it's going to make a big difference to that child when he or she grows up. That's my plea for tonight. Thank you for listening.

Phyllis Rockwell, 23 Ashland Street, Nashua. I have had the fun and the privilege of renovating two buildings downtown – two small commercial buildings. As a member of the Board of Neighborhood Housing Services, I've also had the privilege and the fun of watching this St. Casimir's project begin to take shape. We're hoping that you will look favorably upon this so we can share our enthusiasm for a beautiful building and a wonderful neighborhood that is going to develop from it. Thank you.

TESTIMONY IN OPPOSITION - None

TESTIMONY IN FAVOR - None

TESTIMONY IN OPPOSITION – None

The Public Hearing was declared closed at 7:53 p.m.

Alderman-at-Large Marc W. Plamondon
Committee Clerk, Pro Tem