

REPORT OF THE HUMAN AFFAIRS COMMITTEE

APRIL 4, 2006

A meeting of the Human Affairs Committee was held Tuesday, April 4, 2006 at 8:00 p.m. in the Aldermanic Chamber.

Chairman Marc W. Plamondon presided.

Members of the Committee present: Alderman-at-Large James R. Tollner, Vice Chair
Alderman Richard LaRose
Alderman David MacLaughlin
Alderman Michael Tabacsko

Also in Attendance: Alderman-at-Large Fred S. Teeboom
Katherine E. Hersh, Div. Dir., Community Devel. Division
John Fisher, President, Nashua Soup Kitchen & Shelter
Sheila O'Riordan
Lori Cardin, Chairman, Continuum of Care
Klaas Nijhuis,
Lisa Christie, Exec. Dir., Nashua Soup Kitchen & Shelter

COMMUNICATIONS

From: Lori Cardin, Chair, Greater Nashua Continuum of Care
Re: CDBG Funding – FY07

**MOTION BY ALDERMAN LAROSE TO ACCEPT AND PLACE ON FILE
MOTION CARRIED**

**MOTION BY ALDERMAN MACLAUGHLIN THAT THE RULES BE SO FAR SUSPENDED AS
TO ALLOW FOR THE INTRODUCTION OF A COMMUNICATION RECEIVED AFTER THE
AGENDA WAS PREPARED
MOTION CARRIED**

From: Charlie Matthews, Chair, Hunt Building Board of Trustees
Re: 2007 CDBG Funds

**MOTION BY ALDERMAN MACLAUGHLIN TO ACCEPT AND PLACE ON FILE
MOTION CARRIED**

Alderman Tollner

I would like to ask the Chairman of the committee, there are four entities that are in the audience tonight that have asked to make a very brief comment on the Community Development Block Grant monies – if they could provide us some quick comments prior to our

deliberations so that we could incorporate possibly some of their opinions and comments into the deliberations. Normally we do that after the meeting, but they have promised me that they would be brief and concise and not take up much time at all. Then we could move into the deliberations.

Chairman Plamondon

I have no problem with that as long as it is pertinent to CDBG and not redundant for things that we have heard in the prior meetings. I personally would like to keep it to within 15 minutes, which is our norm for public comment.

Alderman Tollner

I don't think that will be a problem Mr. Chairman.

Chairman Plamondon

Do any of the committee members have any other input?

Alderman Tabacsko

I agree with you Mr. Chairman.

Alderman MacLaughlin

I would say the briefer the better.

PUBLIC COMMENT

John Fisher, Indiana Drive, President of Nashua Soup Kitchen Board of Directors – asked the committee to keep in mind that the CDBG money has helped the neediest in the city for some time, and asked that that be the focus of the money (stick with the consolidated plan and other initiatives that have been started).

Lisa Christie, Ducas Avenue, Executive Director, Nashua Soup Kitchen & Shelter – echoed the remarks made by John Fisher and reminded the committee that the Nashua Soup Kitchen & Shelter is only one of the agencies that receives CDBG money that helps with the homeless and the poorest citizens of our community. She went on to mention that all of the agencies participated in the consolidated plan as well as with the Continuum of Care plan to end homelessness.

Lori Cardin, 77 Marshall Street – Chairman, Nashua Continuum of Care – mentioned that over 500 homeless people were identified back in January to be within the City of Nashua. She stated her concern that the funds be utilized for paving, etc. projects in the city rather than towards brick and mortar projects for the homeless and those most in need, these individuals will wind up at the City's Welfare Office for services.

DISCUSSION

Resolution Authorizing the Mayor to Apply for the Community Development Block Grant and HOME Investment Partnership Grant, Fiscal Year 2007

Chairman Plamondon spoke of his concern with the potential loss of Code Enforcement Officers. He mentioned his consideration of funding \$80,000 out of CDBG funds to assist in that department with full knowledge that the monies should really be funded out of the budget. He asked for discussion from the committee members. He is hopeful that the committee will desire funding the positions out of the FY '07 budget thereby allowing other organizations to be funded out of the CDBG monies. He went on to mention the multi-year projects that currently exist.

He mentioned the request for the Friendship club in so much as to state that he has visited the site, work is being done there, however, he is uneasy with funding it as the group has not come before the committee, and he is of the belief that this request should go before the 505 to seek funding. He continued by mentioning the funds requested from the Hunt Building, which he believes it be a potential multi-year appropriation. He reminded the committee of the fundraising monies held by the Hunt Building that may be a source of funding for them in the near future. Alderman LaRose provided an update by stating that \$44,000 is now accessible (from various previous CDBG projects) to the Hunt Building. The letter received from that group outlines what they are planning for work.

Alderman Tollner stated his understanding of Director Hersh's request to take \$84,000 out of her own operating budget and use CDBG monies. He stated that he is of the opinion that the committee should not fund operating budgets to that degree. He will make every effort to try to incorporate those monies into the city budget.

Sheila O'Riordan provided the committee with an update on the availability of funding. The total available CDBG funds are \$486,608 provided that the multi-year items are accepted as listed on the spreadsheet she was referencing in her overhead projection.

Alderman Tollner suggested making the following allocations:

\$3,500 to Crime Watch (Grant and Project Management), \$5,000 to the Area Agency Wheelchair Ramp, \$103,689 to Housing Programs Operation/Urban Programs, \$150,000 to Housing Improvement Program, \$50,000 to Neighborhood Housing Services – Services, \$35,000 to Neighborhood Housing Services – Project-Based, \$5,000 to PLUS Company Rehabilitation, \$35,000 to Harbor Homes, \$50,000 to Community Council – Prospect Street, \$45,000 for a period of three years for a total of \$135,000 to Adult Learning Center – Lake Street, \$18,000 to Nashua Soup Kitchen & Shelter, \$30,000 to The Boys and Girls Club, Grand Avenue, \$30,000 to Girls, Inc. Renovations, Burke Street, \$45,000 for a period of three years for a total of \$135,000 to Nashua Youth Council, W. Pearl Street, \$18,000 to Nashua Center for the Multiply Handicapped, \$7,000 to Dental Connection, \$3,500 to Crime Watch (Public Improvements), \$30,000 for a period of two years for a total of \$60,000 to Hunt Building (brick re-pointing), \$18,000 to VISTA Assisted Neighborhood Revitalization, \$13,685 to Shattuck Street Playground Renovations, \$8,000 to Sidewalk Wheelchair Ramp Installation, and \$3,000 to NH Legal Assistance – Fair Housing Program.

Discussion continued amongst the committee members with regard to the proposed recommendations.

Chairman Plamondon made mention of his suggested funding, which did not include the .8 miles of sidewalk and the 1.4 miles of street paving. Alderman Tollner was in agreement.

Alderman MacLaughlin expressed his opposition to the proposed reduction in the Nashua Soup Kitchen & Shelter fund. Chairman Plamondon expressed his agreement with the sentiment. Alderman LaRose reminded the committee that the application from the Nashua Soup Kitchen & Shelter was for the purpose of a new roof. Chairman Plamondon expressed his desire to increase the allocation to the Boys & Girls Club to at least \$35,000, increase the allocation to the Nashua Center for the Multiply Handicapped to at least \$20,000, and VISTA to increase to allocate at least \$20,000. He would like to allocate to the sidewalk wheelchair installation the full \$9,230. His suggested changes amount to \$14,230.

Alderman Tollner was in agreement with all of the recommendations that were made.

Sheila O’Riordan reiterated the amounts as being \$20,000 for the Nashua Soup Kitchen & Shelter, \$35,000 for the Buys and Girls Club of Greater Nashua, \$20,000 for the Nashua Center for the Multiply Handicapped, \$20,000 for VISTA Assisted Neighborhood Revitalization, and \$9,230 for the Sidewalk Wheelchair Ramp Installation.

Discussion continued amongst the committee members with regard to the proposed recommendations.

Alderman Tabacsko expressed his desire to fund the Code Enforcement request of \$83,903. Chairman Plamondon made mention of a promise he has received that 80% of the time spent by this group would be in the CDBG areas. Alderman Tollner was appalled at the suggestion to take an operating budget from a city department and fund it through CDBG funds. He is concerned with no monies being left in contingency. Alderman MacLaughlin was in agreement that this would set a bad precedent.

Sheila O’Riordan informed the committee that Code Enforcement qualifies as a specific housing activity. It would not come under the admin. fund. It is its own legitimate activity towards improving the quality of life in the targeted neighborhoods. It is its own paragraph in the statute 572-02c.

When asked if other communities utilize CDBG funds for this type of activity, Mrs. O’Riordan stated that funding code enforcement through CDBG funding is quite common.

With regard to contingency, Ms. O’Riordan stated that she is not aware of ever coming into a CDBG year with less than \$40,000 in contingency. She went on to say that there are no other prior year contingencies as they were all pulled forward this year to expend on the proposals. She does not recommend leaving no contingency. When asked to clarify earlier statements about listing where all funds were to be utilized, Ms. O’Riordan responded “I was under the impression that we were talking about leaving a certain amount in there for Code and then deciding to use it depending upon what was approved in the budget. That can be done. I don’t know of any reason why it can’t be done. I would want to verify that, but I think that is different

than leaving an amount that can be available in the event of an emergency. It is one thing to leave \$80,000 in contingency and say we are going to unofficially hang onto that and use it for Code if we are unsuccessful in getting Code included in the city budget. It is different to operate every year with a little bit of a cushion so that we can function in the event of an emergency.” Chairman Plamondon stated that it had been his intent to leave \$80,000+ in contingency. He believes that if we were to not have a Code Enforcement that would warrant an emergency.

Alderman Teeboom was in agreement that this action would set bad precedent. He suggested that Alderman Tollner attempt to gain the necessary votes to fund this item in the budget, and maintain the funds in within CDBG in the event that he is unsuccessful.

Chairman Plamondon asked for the committee’s concurrence with the following allocations:

Neighborhood Housing Services of Greater Nashua (services) in the amount of \$50,000, Neighborhood Housing Services – Project Based in the amount of \$35,000, PLUS Co. Rehabilitation in the amount of \$6,000, Area Agency for Development Services in the amount of \$5,800, Community Council of Nashua, Inc., in the amount of \$50,000, Adult Learning Center in the amount of \$45,000 for a three year period, Nashua Soup Kitchen & Shelter in the amount of \$20,000, Boys & Girls Club of Greater Nashua in the amount of \$35,000, Girl’s Inc., in the amount of \$30,000, Nashua Youth Council in the amount of \$45,000 over the next three years, Nashua Center for the Multiply Handicapped in the amount of \$20,000, The Dental Connection in the amount of \$9,293, Neighborhood Crime Watch in the amount of \$7,000, Hunt Memorial Building (re-pointing) in the amount of \$50,000, VISTA Assisted Neighborhood Revitalization in the amount of \$20,000, Shattuck Street Playground Renovations in the amount of \$13,685, Sidewalk Wheelchair Ramp Installation in the amount of \$9,230, New Hampshire Legal Assistance in the amount of \$3,000. Contingency in the amount of \$82,600.

**MOTION BY ALDERMAN TOLLNER TO MOVE FORWARD WITH THE
RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE COMMITTEE FOR THE CDBG ALLOCATION BASED UPON
THE WORKSHEET FOR FY07
MOTION CARRIED**

Alderman Tollner thanked the Review & Comment Commission for their efforts into this program.

Alderman LaRose informed the committee of a resolution he has drafted to allow Southern New Hampshire to expend \$35,000 in the immediate future for use on the Senior Center project.

Alderman Tollner suggested that Alderman LaRose provide the full Board with a communication stating his desire to have a first reading, second reading, and disposition of the legislation at the upcoming Board of Aldermen meeting to accommodate the time constraints of the Senior Center Project. Alderman Tabacsko suggested that it would be very helpful that he include in that memo that the Human Affairs Committee unanimously support the action.

Ms. O’Riordan asked whether the next Human Affairs Committee meeting would be when the public hearing would be conducted on the change of use of the funds.

Alderman Tollner suggested that the motion before the Board include passage based upon approval at a public hearing.

Ms O’Riordan informed the committee of the one application received from Neighborhood Housing Services for HOME funds for a project at 2 Shattuck Street. She went on to say that 10% goes to admin., 5% to CHDO (Community Housing Development Organization), and the remainder is held in an account called affordable family rental housing. As recipients come forward and projects qualify then applications are made and decisions are made that require coming back to the Board.

She continued that the development process of the HOME funds is complex, and typically there are multiple funders and takes quite a while to put the projects together. Money cannot be committed until the deal is fully financed. The way it is typically handled is it is left in affordable family rental housing, and if an when a projects gets all the way through the process of development a decision is made.

Alderman Teeboom informed the committee he had received a letter from Margarite’s Place, and did not understand the point of her letter. He asked the committee for clarification. Chairman Plamondon explained his belief that the letter was simply a request that the committee continue with the allocation of funds that have been done for social services over the past several years.

ADJOURNMENT

**MOTION BY ALDERMAN LAROSE TO ADJOURN
MOTION CARRIED**

The meeting was declared adjourned at 10:04 p.m.

Alderman David MacLaughlin
Committee Clerk