Meeting Minutes

Housing & Community Development Act Committee
Tuesday, July 16, 2013 7:30 p.m.
Lorraine H. Morton Civic Center, 2100 Ridge Avenue, Room 2404


Staff Present: C. Ferraro, A. Thompson, S. Flax

Presiding Member: Ald. Rainey, Chair

Declaration of Quorum
There being a quorum, Chairman Rainey called the meeting to order at 7:35 PM.

Approval of Meeting Minutes of March 15, 2013 Meeting
Ald. Wilson moved approval of the minutes of the March 15, 2013 meeting; Ald. Holmes seconded the motion; the minutes were approved unanimously.

Committee Discussion and Recommendation for Use of Additional 2013 CDBG Allocation Above the Estimate Used in the Action Plan
Ald. Rainey opened the floor for discussion of how to allocate $128,544 in additional CDBG funding over the estimated amount used to make allocations in the City’s 2013 Action Plan. Staff recommendations for the committee’s consideration were:

- $20,000 for City Youth and Young Adult Programs – Public Services
- $10,000 for the Handyman Program – Housing
- $15,000 for Grandmother Park – Public Facilities & Infrastructure Improvements
- $83,544 for either Alley Paving or for Replacement of the Fleetwood-Jourdain HVAC System – Public Facilities & Infrastructure Improvements

Ald. Burrus objected to additional funding for Grandmother Park, noting that awarding additional funding to the project was not be transparent, due in part to separate requests to different committees, and that the recommendation went against the agreement made between the Grandmother Park Initiative (GPI) and the Economic Development Committee that the City would provide $50,000 from the Economic Development Fund and the organization would raise the additional funds needed for the project. Ald. Braithwaite commented that the organization had raised over $200,000 and the City would benefit from the completed park, which will become a City property following its completion. The committee discussed the work accomplished by Grandmother Park Initiative to raise funds needed for the project. It was noted that GPI had been allowed to come for additional CDBG in the past as part of their fundraising. Staff noted that $12,000 in CDBG had been allocated ($7,000 in 2012 and $5,000 in 2013) and that the staff recommendation for additional CDBG funds would provide for the cost of acquiring the property and enable the project to get underway. Ald. Rainey suggested that Grandmother Park be awarded an additional $5,000,
which would raise 2013 CDBG funding to the amount the organization requested. Staff will follow up internally about use of funds for acquisition or for construction, as well as whether State or federal prevailing wage would be followed. Following additional discussion, Ald. Holmes moved that $5,000 in additional 2013 CDBG funding be allocated for Grandmother Park, making the 2013 award the $10,000 requested by GPI. Mr. Opdycke seconded the motion and it was approved 5-1 with Ald. Burris voting against the motion.

The need to further expand the City’s Youth and Young Adult Program, which focuses on employment for disadvantaged youth ages of 14-25, was the next topic of discussion. It was agreed that this addressed both a community need and a priority of the City. It was moved and seconded that an additional $20,000 in funding be allocated for this program, bringing CDBG funding to just over 80% of the request and in line with the percent of other requests for Public Services funding that had been awarded.

Additional funding for the Handyman Program was discussed. Ald. Holmes noted the growing need for this program to help low income senior homeowners. She commented that three seniors in her ward had problems with raccoons and squirrels chewing holes in roofs and eaves and that closing up the holes would be an eligible Handyman project. Other needs of seniors that are not part of the Handyman program, including trimming of trees and shrubs and cleaning of alleys, were also discussed. Using the Green Team for this was discussed. Staff was asked to consider addressing these needs as part of the overall needs of seniors in the community.

Ms. Ferraro explained her discussions with Rebuilding Together and the Rebuilding Warehouse as part of the process to identify a new vendor for the Handyman services. Ald. Holmes noted that one Rebuilding Together is a volunteer organization and questioned their capacity and expertise. Ms. Ferraro described some of their accomplishments and noted that their current projects are relatively few in number and larger scale rehabs involving skilled volunteers supervising other volunteers. Ald. Braithwaite recommended she contact Bill Smith, Evanston Community Builders. In response to a question about the number of projects on the waiting list, Ms. Thompson said there were 27 seniors who are Senior Benefit Card holders who have contacted her about needs; additional projects were not being accepted until funds were available and a vendor has been determined.

Mr. Opdycke moved that $20,000 be allocated for the Handyman Program based on the increase in need for the program. Ald. Wilson seconded the motion and it was approved unanimously.

Discussion of the best use of the remaining $83,554 followed. Ald. Holmes noted that there may be a need to replace the HVAC at the Fleetwood-Jourdain Community Center but that allocation of funds for that project before a comprehensive recommendation was developed by staff was premature. She moved that the $83,554 be awarded for Alley Paving, bringing 2013 CDBG funds to a total of $238,554 and close to the requested $250,000. The motion was seconded and approved unanimously.

Staff noted that these allocations were under 10% of the City’s 2013 CDBG grant amount and for activities already funded in the approved 2013 Action Plan, so do not trigger the need for a
Substantial Amendment to that plan. The additional CDBG funding in the amount of $128,544 was allocated as shown below:

- $20,000 for City Youth and Young Adult Programs – Public Services
- $20,000 for the Handyman Program – Housing
- $5,000 for Grandmother Park – Public Facilities & Infrastructure Improvements
- $83,544 for Alley Paving – Public Facilities & Infrastructure Improvements

The committee agreed to cancel the August 20 meeting as there were no items requiring action by the committee. Progress on the rehab of 1817 Church Street was discussed; staff will determine if the October meeting could be held at that location.

Ald. Holmes requested that staff provide an update on the status of the City's comprehensive sign program, which includes the signs for block clubs in the Fifth Ward that were approved for CDBG funding in 2011.

J. Vlahogiannis inquired about progress against goals of the various organizations receiving CDBG funds. Staff will provide information to committee members to inform their consideration of 2014 applications.

**Staff Reports**

Staff provided the following updates on the CDBG program:

- Dates for the 2014 CDBG application review and allocation meeting were discussed and the following agreed on by the committee: September 5, September 10, September 18 and September 26. Ald. Burrus noted she could not be at the Sept. 10 meeting. Staff will provide DVDs of meetings to any committee member who is unable to attend a meeting.

- Subrecipient agreements for most Public Services were completed and first payments of grant funds would be made in August, pending receipt of the City's grant agreement from HUD and the availability of funds in the City's line of credit. Subrecipient agreements for Public Improvements and Housing projects were being finalized. Due to the late release of funds and size of awards, some projects may not be completed in calendar year 2013.

- Fireman's Park project was awarded and construction would be underway in July or early August. Alley Paving projects would be underway in late August following approval by Council at the August meeting. Details of SNAP Lighting and Block Curb and Sidewalk/ADA Curb projects were being finalized.

- 2014 CDBG applications opened July 12 and are due Friday, August 16 at 4PM. Mandatory pre-application meetings scheduled for July 23 at 6:30 PM and Thursday, July 25 at 10 AM.

**Public Comment**

Two Evanston residents attended the meeting but did not make any comment.

**Adjournment**

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 8:45 PM.

Respectfully submitted,
Sarah K. Flax
Housing & Grants Administrator, Community & Economic Development Department