

Presiding Official: Alderman Tisdahl

DECLARATION OF QUORUM

Chair Tisdahl called the meeting to order at 7:10 p.m.

APPROVAL OF THE JULY 23, 2007 MEETING MINUTES

The minutes were approved unanimously with a vote of 9-0.

ITEMS FOR CONSIDERATION

(P1) Request for Affordable Housing Funds from Connections for the Homeless for HMIS Matching Funds

Mr. Paul Selden representing Connections for the Homeless explained their request for Affordable Housing Funds support their HMIS Program. HMIS standards for Homeless Management Information System which is HUD mandated and funded. This program is for the agencies under the Evanston Alliance on Homelessness and provides a Continuum of Care with a community to address the varying needs of the homeless population and similar people at risk. This program also tracks information about the supportive services they provide and the people they serve. Mr. Selden noted that HUD will provide $45,764 to Connections for the Homeless to support administration of the HMIS program, however HUD does require the administering agency to provide matching funds of 20% of the amount funded, and otherwise $9,153. Connections is requesting $0,000 in matching funds from the Affordable Housing Fund similar to the funds that were received from the Mayor’s Special Housing Fund in 2005.

Ald. Bernstein moved approval, seconded by Ald. Wynne.

Ald. Rainey requested more information on what the HMIS product provides, what reports are required by HUD, and is information in these reports a possible useful source to the Community. Mr. Selden responded that the HMIS system holds a wide human services data base which provides information to forward to HUD so they can address and assist the homeless risk population with housing needs. He stated that it is not a list that can be shared with the community due to the private and delicate nature of the personal information contained in this system. Ald. Rainey informed Mr. Selden that she has worked with several committees for the homeless and is aware of this populations needs for decent housing and other human service assistance. She mentioned being aware of many clients that are being placed in several buildings that are in such bad shape that they qualify for condemnation under Property Standards provisions. HUD does their own inspections of their client housing; Mr. Wolinski noted that his
Property Standards Division inspects rental properties on a rotating basis; therefore the City and HUD may need to share information in common.

Ald. Moran directed that Community Development/Property Standards staff come together with Connections for the Homeless staff and share information as they become aware that will be useful to both bodies.

The vote was 9-0 in favor of the motion.

(P2) Request for Affordable Housing Funds from Housing Opportunity Development Corporation for Repairs to 1930 Jackson

The Committee acknowledged Ms. Mary Ellen Tamasy, new Executive Director of HODC. Ms. Tamasy gave some background information on the building. She noted that this is a tough neighborhood with several crime issues. Tenants have moved into this building and want to leave before their lease is up because they choose not to raise their family in that neighborhood and environment.

Ms. Tamasy said that the original funding request was not enough back in 2004 when the two small rental properties on Jackson were acquired by HODC. She noted that the property at 1930 Jackson has a two flat in from with a 3-bedroom unit and a 4-bedroom unit. The property also has a 3-bedroom coach house in the rear that is handicapped accessible and is occupied by a family with a person with disability. She said that the two flat suffered damage to the walls after the water pipes burst and is in need of other interior and exterior repairs such as better lighting in and around the property, the addition of thorny shrubbery around the buildings to keep drug dealers from pulling away the siding from the building to hide their drugs, all around better security, also a new roof is needed at this time. She referred to the pictures provided in the packets demonstrating some of the existing damage in the building.

Ald. Rainey said that she has some real concerns about this property. She noted that HODC somehow has a good reputation for being property managers, therefore why is this property having such great tenant problems with turnovers and busted pipes in the building. Ms. Tamasy responded that the turnover of tenants is due to the unsafe environment of the neighborhood that the tenants were not aware of before they moved their families into the unit and most moved out suddenly without any notice in some cases. The pipes burst when the last tenant moved out and called to have the water shut off when they moved.

Ald. Holmes said that it seems like the condition of the building is all the tenants fault when she is aware that this is not exactly the case. She stated her knowledge that this building was not rehabbed very well in the first place with the funds that were provided originally, otherwise many of these problems should not have aroise within a few years. She also noted that this is the first she has heard of about drug dealers pulling up the siding to hide drugs in the walls of a building. Have the police been informed of this? She made clear that she has kept up with the conditions of this block and knows many long time homeowners that have lived in the 1900 block of Jackson most of their lives and are good people and neighbors. Ms. Tamasy responded that she can not vouch for what happened under the previous Executive Director’s tenure; however she does assure that HODC does screen their tenants well and are not responsible for the actions that happen outside of their buildings within a neighborhood. She also assures that the information was received from tenants living in the building that have witnessed the crime and drug dealing and reported it to HODC. She said that Police were called on most incidents.
Ald. Bernstein also stated his problems with HODC’s management of buildings. He pointed out that history of police calls and problems at the 319 Dempster building. Ms. Tamasy again stated that the majority of that history was under the previous Executive Director; since her induction, there have been no problems noted at the 319 Dempster Building and noted that the previous Director was working on cleaning up this building before she started.

The Committee followed with lengthy discussion on the management of other HODC buildings and many questions arose on how this building became to this point of disrepair. Ms. Tamasy referred to the pictures and pointed out that most of this damage came about due to the burst water pipes and having to bust through the walls to get view the damage done. Many of the Committee members were under the impression that the previous tenant caused all this damage from Ms. Tamasy’s comments. The Committee questioned if this property has been inspected by City Property Standards Inspectors. Ms. Tamasy responded that HUD has inspected this property as well as the City Property Standards Inspectors. They have been cited but have been working to correct their violations. She noted that is why HODC is requesting these funds as well to have the ability to do an entire rehab of the building units and bring up to current code in order to get some good tenants back in this building. The Committee expressed their concerns with the turn-around time of inspections in this area since it is in the Target Area requiring more frequent inspections. Mr. Wolinski responded that Property Standards does have this area on the Target Area inspection revolving time, however the City is not always successful in obtaining access to the building on all scheduled inspection dates due to unforeseen circumstances. Ald. Hansen expressed her concern with this process; she expects and also expects City staff to demand that landlords meet the Target Area Inspection dates, as well as any other building owner throughout Evanston, to adhere to all inspection dates because of the importance of this process. The Committee discussed this matter in further detail.

Ald. Bernstein questioned the properties that were bought and rehabbed by Gary Joyce in that neighborhood back when the Research Park was expected to grow and prosper. Mr. Wolinski noted that Mr. Joyce’s properties are on Wesley and as far as he knows are still owned by Mr. Joyce. Ald. Holmes pointed out that those properties are also selling for well over $500,000 just one block over. She is concerned with the same thing happening to Jackson eventually with developers and not-for-profits buying up the property and then turning around in time to sell for a profit. One of the Committee members mentioned that they heard HODC’s other property on Jackson is being planned for rehab to sell as affordable condominiums and that is why they are rehabbing this property to move the current tenants from 1920 Jackson into 1930 Jackson. Ms. Tamasy admitted that there are plans to rehab 1920 Jackson for sell as affordable housing units, however one of their first priorities would be to assist any current tenants with displacement assistance, whether it is into the 1930 Jackson building or another location.

The Committee discussed further their concerns with the City’s Property Standards inspection program and how to enforce the importance of all inspection dates being kept by landlords. Mr. Wolinski informed the Committee that since this application on Jackson, he has been discussing this situation with Mr. Janusz who is initiating a Property Standards sweep of all rental building in this block. He noted that they can not do much about the social problems that are occurring in that neighborhood but can assure that all rental buildings will have a current up to date inspection that will continue on a regularly scheduled basis. Ald. Holmes said that she has been working with the Police Department about the social problems in that block; which seems to stem from one family that has owned property in that block for many years. She expressed her disappointment that HODC has not come to her directly with any housing interest or concerns in her ward, she has always had to hear about their interest through other sources. Ms. Tamasy said
that she would be happy to work with Ald. Holmes with any upcoming HODC matters in the 5th ward from now on.

**Ald. Moran moved approval, seconded by Ald. Wynne. The vote was 9-0 in favor of the motion.**

**(P3) Resolution 44-R-07 Institute a Down Payment Assistance Program with HOME funds and Local Affordable Housing Funds**

**Ald. Moran moved approval, seconded by Ald. Wynne.**

Ald. Rainey asked staff if a letter could be obtained from the banks in the Evanston Housing Corporation regarding an evaluation of the current condition of the housing market. Mr. Wolinski responded that this question was brought to him last year regarding the current condition of the market and the concerns with the market getting worse and if it is even feasible to keep the First Time Homebuyers Program running. He has the same concerns about the continuation of this program, therefore it might be feasible to obtain information from banks on the lending abilities under the current housing market condition. Ald. Holmes recalled the list of Planned Development projects and the affordable housing fees that are expected to be collected from these developers after a certain period of time. She questions where the City is at with the collection of these fees, noting the Mr. Roszak has not paid his share but Carroll Properties has paid their fees upfront before any building/construction has even occurred. Mr. Wolinski responded that Carroll Properties choose to pay their fees upfront, which Ald. Holmes disagreed with stating that it was more like a proposition made. The regular agreement regarding payment of affordable fees is required upon the first occupancy permit being approved.

Ald. Jean-Baptiste referred to page 11, #14, and suggested that it would be more realistic to have a 1-year length of time versus 120 days of a recipient's death before the loan starts accumulating interest and the balance being paid off. This gives more breathing time for the beneficiaries to sort things out especially if the person is minor. Ald. Bernstein requested to replace “coming of age” with “21 years of age”. The motion for amendments was made and seconded by Ald. Moran. The vote was 9-0 for the amendments and 9-0 vote for the approval of the amended Resolution.

**(P4) Ordinance 78-O-07 – Amending Section 4-2-2 of the City Code to Prohibit Windowless Rooms in New Construction**

Ald. Wynne noted that this was not the intention of her reference made. She clarified that she was not referring to all windowless habitable spaces, only sleeping rooms. Mr. Hallen acknowledged Ald. Wynne’s request and will make the changes and bring back before the Committee. **This item was held in Committee until the September 10th meeting.**

**(P5) major Variation Request for 605 Davis Street**

The Committee acknowledged Mr. Tim Sheridan, architect for the developer, 605 Davis, LLC. He introduced the representatives of the property owners, Ms. Martha J. Koch, trustee under the Martha J. Koch Trust. He also introduced the real estate broker for the property.

Mr. Sheridan noted that the subject property is 60’ x 90’ and requires 5 parking spaces and a loading berth. He followed with a presentation and overview of the proposed one-story commercial building for this site. He noted that the applicant is requesting zoning relief from the loading berth to allow zero loading berth. The Zoning Board of Appeals had a split vote of 2-2 for this proposal. Mr. Sheridan noted that he has since then met with staff to present a revised
Ald. Wollin brought attention to the private alley behind this property which is not accessible to through traffic. She agrees with staff and Mr. Sheridan that the original proposal offers a greater benefit and she also feels that providing parking is more valuable than the loading berth. However she wants assurance that all loading/unloading be done through this private alley. Both Mr. Sheridan and Ms. Koch fully agreed with and assured that this condition was already figured into this proposal for loading and unloading.

Ald. Wollin moved approval, seconded by Ald. Rainey to create an ordinance to bring back before the Committee. The vote was 9-0 in favor of the motion.

COMMUNICATIONS

(PD2) Memorandum from Fire Chief Berkowsky Regarding 736-38 Dobson Fire Suppression System
This communication was accepted by the Committee.

(PD3) Change in Chairmanship
This communication was accepted by the Committee.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 8:40 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Jacqueline E. Brownlee